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ABSTRACT

The Developmental Program of the Chesapeake Public School Division (Virginia) is designed to provide a year between kindergarten and first grade for the academically able student who is not ready for the structure of the regular first grade because of physical, emotional, or social (developmental) immaturity. It is an all-day, full-year program that served 212 students in 18 elementary schools in 1996-97. An evaluation of the program's operation for that school year examined how the program was implemented, the academic success of the students, benefits to students, parental satisfaction, the satisfaction of the educators involved, and the status of the program. Surveys of principals, teachers, and parents, and achievement data for 39 students from the 1991-92 Developmental Program were conducted. Findings reveal that the Developmental Program is not being implemented as originally intended. The program no longer serves just the academically able who are developmentally immature. Selection criteria vary from school to school, and the resulting student population is mixed. This is of some concern to teachers and parents. The program is a high-cost retention program, with a per-pupil personnel cost 82% higher than for a regular first grader. Overall achievement gains appear to be short-lived. Former students currently in the fifth grade scored below the school average and below the 50th percentile on the standardized achievement test, and none had managed to catch up with their kindergarten peers in the sixth grade. One third of former students have been placed in learning disabled or special education programs. Current parents (97% of 37 respondents) and past parents (86% of 29) and principals (89% of 14) are satisfied with the program, and most agree that the quality of teaching is high and the social and emotional needs of these children are being met. Recommendations for the school district include the study of some alternatives to the developmental program and the establishment of guidelines for the selection of students. Ten appendixes contain background documents related to the study. (Contains 14 charts.) (SLD)

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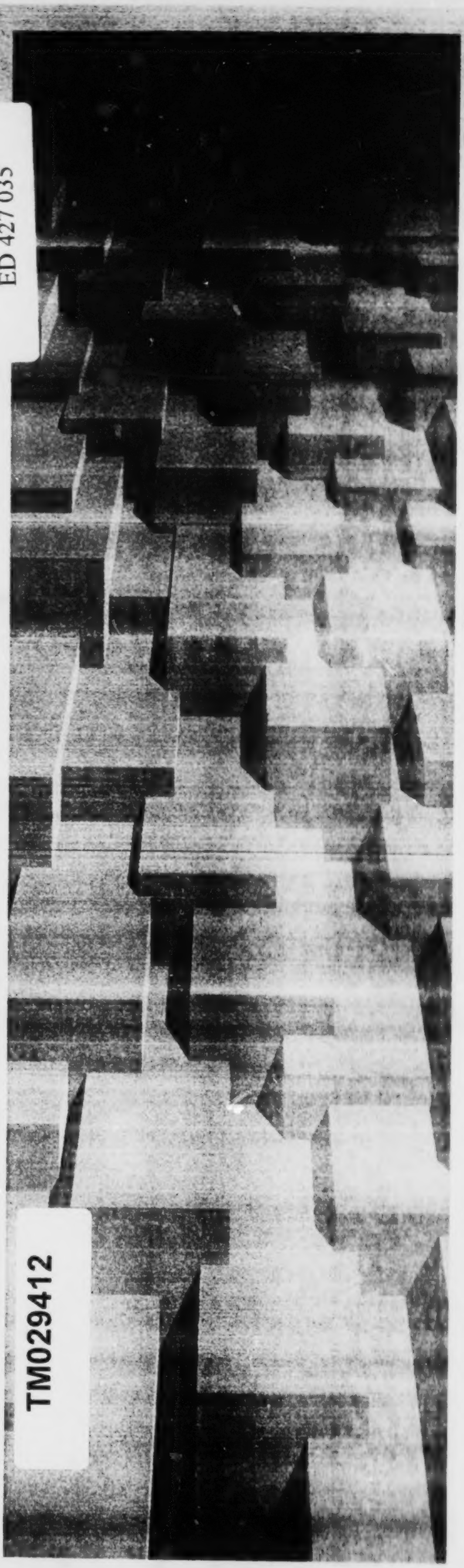

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DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

EVALUATION

OFFICE OF
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JULY 14, 1997

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DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM EVALUATION
HOW TO READ THE EVALUATION REPORT

This report documents the results of the evaluation of the Developmental Program. The Table of Contents lists each section of the evaluation project and the related charts and appendices. The report is divided into the following sections:

- **Executive Summary of the Evaluation**
- **Overall Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations**
- **Evaluation Proposal**
- **Review of the Literature**
- **Survey of Principals**
- **Group Meeting with Principals**
- **Survey of Regular First-Grade Teachers**
- **Meeting with Developmental Program Teachers and Reading Specialists**
- **Survey of Current Parents**
- **Survey of Past Parents**
- **Achievement Information from K-5 Elementary Schools**
- **Information from Central Office Administrators**
- **Appendices**

An **Executive Summary of the Evaluation** is provided at the front of the report. The summary is an overview of the evaluation.

The **Overall Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations** section includes the research questions, performance criteria for success, and final findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluation. To obtain more detailed information regarding the findings, conclusions, and recommendations related to each data collection procedure, the reader should refer to the individual sections of the evaluation. Charts pertaining to each section appear immediately after the pages which refer to them.

The **Evaluation Proposal** defines the scope of the evaluation as agreed upon by team members and the administrator of the project and contains the signatures of the program evaluation team leader and the administrator of the project.

The **Review of the Literature** provides information related to the research which guided the data collection activities of the evaluation.

The **Survey of Principals** section provides the results of the formal survey of all principals of elementary schools with developmental programs (1 kindergarten and 18 first-grade programs) and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Group Meeting with Principals** section provides the results of the meeting held to discuss the Developmental Program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Survey of Regular First-Grade Teachers** section provides the results of the formal survey of a random sample of regular first-grade teachers of the school division and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Meeting with Developmental Program Teachers and Reading Specialists** section provides the results of the meeting held to discuss the Developmental Program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Survey of Current Parents** section provides the results of the formal survey of a random sample of parents of students currently enrolled in the Developmental Program (1996-97) and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Survey of Past Parents** section provides the results of the formal survey of a random sample of parents of students enrolled in the 1994-95 Developmental Program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Achievement Information from K-5 Elementary Schools** section provides the results of the data collection from six K-5 elementary schools regarding the academic history of students of the 1991-92 Developmental Program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Information from Central Office Administrators** section presents the data collected regarding costs associated with the Developmental Program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Appendices** section includes the background documents related to the study.

It is hoped that the format of this report will assist the reader in understanding the evaluation of the Developmental Program.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM EVALUATION
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

A public demand for rigorous educational standards began in the 1950's when Americans blamed a lax educational system for allowing our country to fall behind in the race to space. The educational community responded to the demand by adopting more difficult curricula on all levels. Kindergarten and first-grade curricula which previously had focused largely on building the self-confidence of young children in a group setting were replaced with an academic curricula. Kindergartners and first graders who were physically, emotionally, and/or socially immature found it difficult to succeed in a more structured primary program which emphasized workbooks, worksheets, and lock-step instruction (Connell 1987).

By the 1980's kindergarten and first-grade retentions surpassed the number of retentions in other grades (Wortham and Patton 1992). In an effort to reduce the risk of failure for young children, concerned practitioners implemented programs to provide developmentally immature students with a "transitional" year of maturation between kindergarten and first grade (Connell 1987). For well over a decade, developmental programs have been used as one means to shelter from failure the unready members of an increasingly diverse population of young children while meeting public demands for high standards.

What is the Developmental Program?

The Developmental Program is designed to provide a year between kindergarten and first grade for the academically able student who is not ready for the structure of regular first grade. Lack of readiness is generally defined as physical, emotional, and/or social (developmental) immaturity. The Developmental Program is intended to be a child-centered program which builds on the academic and social level of each student through an activity-oriented and discovery curriculum.

How does the Developmental Program work in the Chesapeake Public Schools?

The Developmental Program is an all-day, full-year program which was fully implemented in all primary schools in Chesapeake in 1990-91 after pilot programs were conducted at Park (now Thurgood Marshall), Butts Road, and Deep Creek elementary schools.

In the 1996-97 school year, 15 elementary schools each have one developmental classroom. Three other elementary schools combine developmental students into a regular first-grade classroom. The typical classroom has sixteen or fewer students with one teacher and a four-hour teaching assistant in contrast to a regular first-grade classroom which averages twenty-two students per teacher with no assigned teaching assistant. A total of 212 students are served divisionwide. The developmental curriculum is generally comprised of learning activities pertaining to communication skills, mathematics, social studies, science and health, art, music, and perceptual/motor skills.

Written program guidelines indicate that a student is recommended for the program by the kindergarten teacher after observations, other measures of performance, and the results of the Developmental Screening Checklist indicate the student is developmentally immature for regular first-grade placement despite chronological age. Qualification for the program is determined ultimately by a Developmental Screening Team which includes the kindergarten teacher, kindergarten and first-grade level chairpersons, guidance counselor, Developmental Program teacher, and principal. Enrollment of a student in the program is contingent upon the written consent of the parent.

What does educational literature say about the Developmental Program (see Review of the Literature, page 23)?

Despite the best intentions of practitioners, research has offered little support for the transitional year. Those who are not in favor of the developmental program base their concerns on the following **negative aspects**:

- Developmental programs require that an extra year be added to a student's educational career. Opponents contend that this is just another form of retention (Ostrowski 1994).
- Evidence of academic success of developmental students is scant. Research generally supports promotion to first grade rather than kindergarten retention or developmental program placement (Dennebaum and Kulberg 1994).
- Developmental programs can become a program primarily for children with low abilities and emotional problems (Wortham and Patton 1992).
- Developmental programs may encourage a pattern of lowered expectations for developmental students (Stroud 1992).
- Equity for children may be compromised because of the profile of the developmentally immature. The "unready" tend to be students who never attended preschool, who have birthdays in the quarter just prior to entrance, who enter kindergarten despite testing to the contrary, or who are boys (Stroud 1992).
- Providing developmental programs impedes progress toward making the entire primary program more developmentally appropriate or activity oriented (Ostrowski 1994).

The few proponents of developmental programs counter with the following **positive aspects**:

- Developmental program placement is an alternative to retaining a student later in the educational career. Proponents claim that developmentally immature students likely would be retained at some point and that early retentions are less damaging to self-esteem (Coletta 1991).
- Most students gain self-confidence and social growth in a success-oriented program that allows time for maturation (Coletta 1991).
- Parents have voiced strong support for developmental programs (Coletta 1991).

Proponents concede, however, that the weight of research indicates that academic success is questionable at best (Coletta 1991).

Both groups agree that making the entire primary curriculum developmentally appropriate is a worthwhile goal. Educators in favor of the Developmental Program emphasize that providing a discovery and activity-oriented curriculum for all primary students will take considerable time due to the need for teacher training and smaller class sizes (Coletta 1991). Educators opposed to the Developmental Program maintain that the developmental program itself is an impediment to achieving a more developmentally appropriate curriculum for all (Ostrowski 1994). Alternative recommendations include providing multiage grouping, an ungraded primary program, or extra help in the regular classroom in the form of peer or adult tutoring. It is argued that these strategies along with an appropriate curriculum focus on how to make the school ready for children rather than how to make children ready for school (Ostrowski 1994).

How was the Developmental Program evaluated?

The Chesapeake School Board designated the Developmental Program as one of the evaluation projects of the 1996-97 school year. The purpose of the evaluation was to examine

- how the program is implemented (i.e., the population served and the student selection/parent notification process)
- the academic success of students
- the social and emotional benefits to students
- the level of satisfaction among parents, teachers, and administrators
- costs associated with the program
- the current status of programs in other school divisions

The components of the evaluation included the following:

- Survey of all principals with developmental programs (return rate of 100%)
- Survey of 50% of regular first-grade teachers (return rate of 65%)
- Survey of 50% of parents of students in the 1994-95 program (return rate of 33%)
- Survey of 50% of parents of students currently enrolled in the program (return rate of 34%)
- Group meeting with principals with developmental programs (14 principals)
- Group meeting with a random sample of developmental teachers and reading specialists representing each section of the school division (5 teachers and 5 reading specialists)
- Achievement data for 39 students in K-5 schools from the 1991-92 Developmental Program
- Information from central office administrators regarding costs of the program
- Contacts with other school divisions
- Review of the literature

What are the major conclusions from the evaluation?

1. The Developmental Program currently is not being implemented as originally intended. The program no longer serves just the academically able who are developmentally immature. The

criteria for the selection of students varies from school to school, and the resulting population of students is mixed.

2. The mixing of students is a concern of some parents and developmental teachers, in particular.

3. The program is a high-cost, retention program.
    - The per pupil personnel cost is 82% higher than for a regular first-grade student.
    - With few exceptions, students remain in school an extra year due to the program.
    - Principals estimate that 50% of developmental students would not be retained if they did not enter the Developmental Program. The cost of these students is equal to an estimated $600,000 each year that the program continues.

4. Overall achievement gains appear to be short-lived, at best, even with an extra year in the elementary grades.
    - Former students now in the fifth grade scored below the school average (84.6% of students) and below the fiftieth percentile (68.3% of students) on the standardized achievement test for fourth grade.
    - None of the former students managed to "catch-up" with their kindergarten peers in the sixth grade.

5. Distinguishing between developmental immaturity and learning disabilities at this age may be difficult. One-third of the former students have been placed in LD or ED special education programs.

6. Current parents (97%) and past parents (86%), first-grade teachers (93%), and principals (89%) are satisfied with the current developmental program.
    - The quality of teaching in the Developmental Program appears to be high, and the social and emotional needs of young children are being met.
    - Few alternatives currently exist for primary-aged children in most schools.
    - There is a general consensus that the Developmental Program "prevents" a retention in later years.

7. Groups agree that significant changes have occurred since the program's inception.
    - Fewer "young children" enter kindergarten since the age requirements for entering school have been increased.
    - The kindergarten and first-grade curricula are more "developmentally appropriate" including discovery projects and hands-on learning.
    - The at-risk population in schools has increased.
    - Developmental teachers, once enthusiastic, are no longer major supporters of the program.
    - Close to half of principals and a number of developmental teachers feel that other alternative programs could serve these children as well or better.

8. Educational research, overall, is not supportive of "developmental" or "transitional" programs particularly in regard to achievement. The findings in Chesapeake regarding both advantages and disadvantages parallel educational research.

9. Other regional school divisions either never had a Developmental Program or have scaled down or eliminated the program.

10. Alternatives to developmental programs described in the educational literature include multiage grouping, an ungraded primary program, or extra help in the regular classroom in the form of peer or adult tutoring.

What are the major recommendations for the future of the Developmental Program in Chesapeake?

1. Convene a study group of principals from elementary schools with developmental programs and representatives of the Instructional Department to redefine the "developmental program" based on (a) changes in the population of students served, (b) changes in the kindergarten and first-grade curricula in the past five years, (c) long-term achievement data, and (d) cost factors. The committee should

   A. Assess the range of best instructional practices for serving students typically placed in developmental programs

   B. Establish citywide guidelines regarding selection of programs for the targeted population of primary students. Guidelines should include but not be limited to the following:

      - Shift the focus of the teacher/teacher assistant positions to a program that keeps children on grade level.
      - Discourage classes that place a wide variety of children with problems in one class labeled as "developmental" or first grade.
      - Allow principals flexibility within developed guidelines to use the designated positions for interventions that are suitable for their population of students.
      - Require the maintenance of achievement data on those children in special intervention programs through fifth grade in order to document the long-term success of each program.

2. Delay changes in the Developmental Program to the 1998-99 school year to allow

   A. Development of guidelines
   B. Staff training on best practices
   C. School planning

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OVERALL FINDINGS, CONCLUSION'S, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERALL FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERALL FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the following information sources: Survey of Principals, Group Meeting with Principals, Survey of Regular First-Grade Teachers, Meeting with Developmental Teachers and Reading Specialists, Survey of Current Parents, Survey of Past Parents, Achievement Information from K-5 Elementary Schools, and Information from Central Office Administrators. More specific information can be found in the individual sections which follow that pertain to each data collection activity.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS: See Proposal, pages 18-21.

OVERALL FINDINGS:

PROGRAM FINDINGS

1. **Is the Developmental Program being implemented as planned by (a) serving the intended population of average and above-average students and (b) using a standard selection process?**
    - Parents, teachers, and principals agree that current developmental programs are serving a majority of students with average or above-average ability who are developmentally young along with students who have academic and behavior problems. In other words, in many schools the population is mixed (see Chart 1, page 9).
    - In terms of the selection process, almost all principals begin with the recommendation of the kindergarten teacher followed by a team of professionals who evaluate student eligibility and screen for special education placement. Most schools, however, are not using a divisionwide, standard checklist of indicators for placement (see Chart 1, page 9).
    - With regard to the notification of parents, only a small percentage of principals (21%) indicated that they use a standard, systemwide letter when students are recommended for the developmental program. Most (73%) use a letter written by the individual principal or a combination of ways to notify parents (see Chart 1, page 9).

2. **What factors have changed since the Developmental Program's inception which may affect the relevance of the original goals and objectives?**
    - Since the Developmental Program began, there has been a rollback in the age of students entering kindergarten (five years of age by September 30 rather than December 30).
    - A significant majority of principals (89%) and teachers (81%) agree that in the past five years the curricula in kindergarten and first grade are more "developmentally appropriate" including discovery projects and hands-on learning activities (see Chart 1, page 9).

CHART 1
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

DATA SOURCE	PROGRAM FINDINGS				SATISFACTION FINDINGS				ACHIEVEMENT FINDINGS			
	What is the population served?	Is the student selection process standard?	Is the parent notification process standard?	Are the K and 1st-grade curricula more approp today?	Are parents, teachers, and principals satisfied?	Do students experience emotional/social success?	Is the appropriate population served?	Can other programs serve developmental students?	Do students experience academic success?	Do students enter first grade after the Dev Prog?	Does the program prevent later retentions?	Do children go to special ed?
Principal Survey	Mixed* 43%	Yes/K tchr recommends Yes/Team determines eligibility Yes/Screening for Spec Ed No/Std Cklist of indicators	No 73%	Yes 89%	Yes 89%	Yes 95%	Yes 95%	Yes No 42% 42%	Yes 95%	Yes 89%	Yes 84%	No 95%
Regular First-Grade Teacher Survey	Mixed* 52%	NA	NA	Yes 81%	Yes 93%	Yes 98%	Yes 60%	No 86%	Yes 83%	Yes 98%	Yes 83%	No 93%
Past Parent Survey	Mixed* 38%	NA	No**	NA	Yes 86%	Yes 96%	NA	NA	Yes 99%	Yes 97%	NA	No 90%
Current Parent Survey	Mixed* 32%	NA	No**	NA	Yes 97%	Yes 95%	NA	NA	Yes 97%	Yes 73%	NA	Yes 22%
Group Meeting with Principals	Mixed* Majority	NA	No	Yes	Yes Most	Yes Most	Yes Most	Yes/No	Yes Most	Yes Most	Yes Most	NA
Group Meeting w/Developmental Teachers/Reading Specialists	Mixed* Most	NA	NA	Yes	No Most	Yes Most	No Most	Yes/No	NA	Yes Most	NA	NA
Achievement Data	Mixed*	No	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	NA	No 85% below school avg 68% below 50th percentile (ITBS)	Yes 100%	NA	Yes 33% placed in special ed
Literature Review	Mixed*	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes Practitioners	NA
Other School Divisions* **	Avg and Above-Avg Dev Immature	NA	NA	Yes/No	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	NA

*Students with a variety of learning and behavior problems

**Parents, however, generally expressed satisfaction with the way they were notified.

***Developmental programs either were never offered or have been terminated in most of the school divisions contacted. Answers to questions refer to when the programs were in operation.

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3. **How does the cost of the Developmental Program compare with the cost of the regular, first-grade program?**
    - The per pupil personnel cost is 82% higher than for a regular first-grade student (see Chart 2, page 11).
    - The estimated cost of an additional year of schooling for each class of developmental students is estimated to cost $1,189,944. Principals estimate that approximately 50% of these students would be retained anyway at some point in their school career. The estimated cost of the remaining 50% of students who automatically spend an additional year in school due to the Developmental Program is $594,972 (see Chart 3, page 11).
    - If the Developmental Program were eliminated, 4 teaching positions would become available (see Chart 4, page 12, and Appendix 9, page 100). The 19 part-time teacher assistant positions could be reduced to 3.2 full-time positions (see Chart 5, page 12). These positions represent $235,366 in monetary resources that could be reallocated to other programs.

SATISFACTION FINDINGS

1. **Do parents, teachers, and administrators express satisfaction with the Developmental program?**
    - High percentages of principals, first-grade teachers, and parents (86-97%) express overall satisfaction with the Developmental Program (see Chart 1, page 9).
    - Only developmental teachers and reading specialists expressed dissatisfaction. Developmental teachers find it frustrating (1) to teach a variety of students with behavior and learning problems in a developmental program or (2) to teach a combined group of developmental students and regular first-grade children.
    - High percentages of groups surveyed (and interviewed) indicated that the developmental program provides for greater emotional and social success than regular first grade (see Chart 1, page 9).
    - When asked if the Developmental Program is serving the appropriate population of students, opinions differed among the groups
        - Almost all principals indicated "yes" (95%).
        - The majority of first-grade teachers indicated "yes" (60%).
        - Interviewed developmental teachers and reading specialists strongly indicated "no." These teachers disagree with the practice of combining significant numbers of children with behavior and learning problems in with academically able children who are developmentally immature.
    - When asked if other programs could serve developmental students as well or better, opinions differed (see Chart 1, page 9).
        - Eighty-six percent of first-grade teachers said "no."
        - Interviewed developmental teachers and reading specialists had mixed opinions.
        - Forty-two percent of principals said "yes;" an equal number said "no."

CHART 2
PER PUPIL COST COMPARISON OF REGULAR FIRST GRADE AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Developmental First Grade Average Budgeted Per Pupil Cost * 1996-97	Regular Elementary Average Budgeted Per Pupil Cost * 1996-97	Dollar Difference	Percentage Difference
$3,877	$2,125	$1,752	82%

*Salaries and benefits only (see Appendix 8, page 99)

CHART 3
FUNDS AVAILABLE EACH YEAR IF NO DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Average Budgeted Per Pupil Cost 1996-97	Average Annual Number of Students in the Developmental Program	% of Developmental Students Not Likely to Be Retained in K-6**	Estimated Funds Available If Another Year of School Is Not Added for Developmental Students
$5,509	216	50.0%	$594,972

**Estimated by principals in an informal survey (see Appendix 10, page 101)

CHART 4
FUNDS AVAILABLE EACH YEAR IF NO DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Cost of 16.7 Teaching Positions for Developmental Program	Cost of 12.7 Additional Teaching Positions for First-Grade Program	Estimated Funds Available If No Developmental Program
$704,326	$535,625	$168,701

CHART 5
FUNDS AVAILABLE EACH YEAR IF NO DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Cost of 19 Part-time Teacher Assistants for Developmental Program	Cost of 3.2 Additional Full-TimeTeacher Assistants for First-Grade Program	Estimated Funds Available Each Year If No Developmental Program
$117,669	$51,004	$66,665

TOTAL = $235,366

- In a group session, principals offered the following possible alternatives: multiage grouping, regular first-grade placement now that the kindergarten and first-grade curricula are more developmentally appropriate, an early intervention kindergarten program, a full-day kindergarten program, Reading Recovery as a support program, and a program serving a variety of students to be developed at the building level.

2. **How does educational literature evaluate developmental programs in general?**
   - The few researchers who support the Developmental Program cite its positive effects on social growth and self-esteem for children. Greater numbers of researchers do not agree with the concept of the program, stating that the program is a form of retention and citing the lack of evidence that students benefit academically (see Review of the Literature, page 23).

3. **What is the current status of developmental programs in other school divisions?**
   - Of the eight school divisions contacted, two (Suffolk and Portsmouth) currently offer the developmental program but only in a few schools. Four other school divisions previously offered the program but terminated the program for various reasons, including a lack of achievement data and an increase in the number of overage students (see Appendix 1, pages 79-84).

ACHIEVEMENT FINDINGS

1. **What is the academic success of developmental students?**
   - Principals, first-grade teachers, and parents (current and past) expressed high satisfaction with the academic success of students, describing achievement as average and above (see Chart 1, page 9.)

2. **Is the Developmental Program a retention program with students entering regular first grade the next year?**
   - High percentages of principals, first-grade teachers, and parents (current and past) expected children to enter regular first grade and not second after the Developmental Program (see Chart 1, page 9).
   - High percentages of principals (84%) and first-grade teachers (85%) expressed that the Developmental Program prevented a possible retention in later years.

3. **Do students catch-up academically with the "gift of time"?**
   - Achievement data of 39 current fifth graders who entered the Developmental Program in 1991-92 reveals the following (see Chart 1, page 9):
     - On the fourth-grade standardized achievement tests, the majority (85%) scored below the school average and below the fiftieth percentile (68%).
     - One-third (33%) of the students are receiving LD or ED special education

services even though principals, first-grade teachers, and parents expect few to require special education services.

- Of the sample population, 100% are one year behind for their age group with none managing to "catch-up" to their kindergarten peers who are in the sixth grade.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS:

PROGRAM CONCLUSIONS

1. Developmental programs no longer serve academically able, developmentally immature students exclusively. The population of students served varies among the developmental programs in the school division and includes a mix of students with various learning and/or behavior problems.

2. The student selection process is standardized in terms of the steps followed, but all principals are not identifying students using the same checklist of characteristics for placement. It appears that principals are using the developmental program to teach children who are at risk of failing first grade for a variety of reasons which vary from school to school based on the community served.

3. Schools use a variety of methods to notify parents that their child has been recommended for the Developmental Program, but parents indicate that they are satisfied with the way they were informed of the recommendation.

4. Changes in the past five years have affected the nature (and original design) of the Developmental Program.
    - A rollback in the benchmark date for entering school from December 30 to September 30
    - A change to a curriculum in kindergarten and first grade that is more developmentally appropriate (discovery and activity oriented).
    - An increase in the at-risk population in schools

5. Principals and teachers agree that the kindergarten and first-grade curricula are more developmentally appropriate. Teachers, however, are still in the process of being trained in the use of materials such as math manipulatives and the new elementary English program.

6. The cost of the Developmental Program is high in terms of (a) per pupil personnel cost which is 82% higher than regular first grade and (b) the extra year of schooling automatically added to each child's education which is estimated to add nearly $600,000 for each year developmental programs continue.

7. If the current developmental students were moved directly to first grade after kindergarten,

approximately $235,000 would become available in teacher and teacher assistant positions. These funds could be reallocated to other primary programs.

SATISFACTION CONCLUSIONS

1. Parents, regular first-grade teachers, and principals, in general, are satisfied with the current Developmental Program. Only developmental teachers (and reading specialists) express frustration with the current program which often mixes substantial numbers of children with learning and/or behavior problems in with the group intended to be served.

2. Parental satisfaction with the Developmental Program appears to be directly linked to (a) satisfaction with the developmental teacher who is typically a solid teacher and (b) the emotional and social benefits of the program as a result of good teaching which is appropriately paced. Parental satisfaction is predicted in the educational literature.

3. Principals and regular first-grade teachers are of the opinion that the appropriate population of students is being served because the program is targeting children with a wide range of learning and behavior problems before they enter regular first grade. This opinion persists even though the children in classes often vary from the group intended to be served. Developmental teachers who work with these classes daily generally disagree with principals and first-grade teachers.

4. Opinions vary as to whether other programs could serve developmental students as well. Some variation among groups may be due to the fact that other options are currently not available in many schools. First-grade teachers are convinced that no other program could serve these children as well or better. Principals, developmental teachers, and reading specialists appear to be equally divided on the subject. Alternatives suggested by some principals include multiage grouping, regular first-grade placement now that the kindergarten and first-grade curricula are more "developmental," an early intervention kindergarten program, and Reading Recovery as a support program for some children. Regardless of the intervention, all groups perceive the need for special teaching efforts which focus on the children currently served by this program.

5. Educational literature in general does not support the Developmental Program because of the retention issue and the lack of evidence of academic achievement.

6. Most of the school divisions in the region either never offered the Developmental Program or have terminated the program for various reasons including a lack of data showing academic success and an increase in overage students.

ACHIEVEMENT CONCLUSIONS

1. Parents, teachers, and principals are of the opinion that students in the Developmental

Program experience academic success. Opinions are likely based on performance in the primary grades only.

2. Long-term achievement data on former developmental students now in the fifth grade revealed that in spite of the extra year of elementary schooling, children are not achieving at an average level on standardized tests and none were able to "catch up" to their peers who are in the sixth grade. These findings are predicted in the educational literature.

3. Distinguishing between developmental immaturity and learning and behavior problems at this age may be difficult as evidenced by the fact that a significant minority of the long-term sample studied were later placed in LD and ED special education programs.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Convene a study group of principals from elementary schools with developmental programs and representatives of the Instructional Department to redefine the "developmental program" based on (a) changes in the population of students served, (b) changes in the kindergarten and first-grade curricula in the past five years, (c) long-term achievement data, and (d) cost factors. The committee should

   A. Assess the range of best instructional practices for serving students typically placed in developmental programs

   B. Establish citywide guidelines regarding selection of programs for the targeted population of primary students. Guidelines should include but not be limited to the following:

      - Shift the focus of the teacher/teacher assistant positions to a program that keeps children on grade level.
      - Discourage classes that place a wide variety of children with problems in one class labeled as "developmental" or first grade.
      - Allow principals flexibility within developed guidelines to use the designated positions for interventions that are suitable for their population of students.
      - Require the maintenance of achievement data on those children in special intervention programs through fifth grade in order to document the long-term success of each program.

2. Delay changes in the Developmental Program to the 1998-99 school year to allow

   A. Development of guidelines
   B. Staff training on best practices
   C. School planning

CHESAPEAKE
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EVALUATION PROPOSAL

PROGRAM EVALUATION PROPOSAL

The Proposal defines the scope of the evaluation as agreed upon by team members and the administrator of the project.

PROGRAM EVALUATION PROPOSAL
CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PROJECT: Developmental Program
ADMINISTRATOR: Larry Short, Director of Elementary Education

PROJECT PROFILE:

DESCRIPTION: The Developmental Program is designed to provide a transitional year between kindergarten and first grade for the academically able student who is not ready for the structure of a regular first grade. A student is recommended for the program by the kindergarten teacher after observations, other measures of performance, and the results of the Developmental Screening Checklist indicate the student is "unready" or "immature" for regular first-grade placement despite chronological age. Qualification for the program is ultimately determined by a Developmental Screening Team (DST) which includes the kindergarten teacher, kindergarten and first-grade level chairpersons, guidance counselor, Developmental Program teacher, and principal. Enrollment of a student in the program is contingent upon the written consent of the parent.

The Developmental Program is designed to be a child-centered program which builds on the academic and social level of each student. Developmentally appropriate instruction is offered through an activity-oriented and discovery curriculum of communication skills, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, and perceptual/motor skills.

The Developmental Program is an all-day, full-year program which was fully implemented in all primary schools in Chesapeake in 1990-91 after pilot programs were conducted at Butts Road, Deep Creek, and Park elementary schools.

In the 1996-97 school year, 15 elementary schools each have one developmental classroom. Three other elementary schools combine developmental students into a regular first-grade classroom. A total of 212 students are served in the school division.

GROUP SERVED: Students who are academically able but are not ready for the structure of the regular first-grade program due to a lack of physical, emotional, and/or social maturity

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: To provide a year of instruction between kindergarten and first grade so that students who are unready for regular first grade have the opportunity (1) to grow physically, emotionally, and/or socially, and (2) to experience greater academic success than would be possible in the regular first-grade classroom

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How does the educational literature evaluate developmental programs in general?
2. Is the Developmental Program being implemented as planned (i.e., the program is serving the intended population and a standard process of selection is being used)?

3. Does enrollment in the Developmental Program provide for greater emotional and social success for enrollees than a regular first grade?

4. What is the next grade for children in the Developmental Program?

5. What is the academic history of students who entered the Developmental Program in the 1991-92 school year? Do students "catch up" in later grades?

6. What factors have changed since the Developmental Program's inception which may affect the relevance of the original goals and objectives? Are other more appropriate programs available?

7. Do parents, teachers, and administrators express satisfaction with the Developmental Program?

8. How does the cost of the Developmental Program compare to the cost of the regular program?

9. What is the current status of developmental programs in other school divisions?

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

1. The Developmental Program
    - serves academically able students who are not ready for first grade
    - enrolls students in all schools based on a standard selection process which includes (1) an initial recommendation by the kindergarten teacher based on characteristics of developmental immaturity (2) evaluation by the DST team which includes a process for eliminating other mitigating factors such as qualification for special education, and (3) a divisionwide letter to parents clearly stating the recommendation of the team and an invitation to a follow-up conference if desired

2. At least 75% of teachers and administrators surveyed recommend the Developmental Program over other alternative programs.

3. The sample of developmental students from the 1991-92 school year who were studied
    - were in the grade level appropriate for their chronological age five years after exiting the Developmental Program
    - scored at or above the school average on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in the 4th grade
    - were not placed in special education

4. At least 75% of parents of children currently enrolled in the Developmental Program who were surveyed express satisfaction with the program.

At least 75% of parents of children enrolled in the 1994-95 Developmental Program who were surveyed express satisfaction with the program.

5. The per pupil cost of the Developmental Program does not exceed the per pupil cost of the regular program by more than 20%.

DATA AND METHODS OF COLLECTION:

1. **Program Data**
    - Population served and selection process from (1) a survey of all elementary principals with Developmental Programs, (2) a group meeting that includes all elementary principals with Developmental Programs, (3) interviews with central office personnel who are familiar with the background of the program, (4) a survey of 50% of first-grade teachers randomly selected, (5) interviews with one Developmental Program teacher and one Reading Specialist from each section of the school division, (6) a survey of 50% of parents of students currently and previously (1994-95) enrolled in the Developmental Program randomly selected
    - Current status of developmental programs in other school divisions from contacts with local school divisions and the Department of Education

2. **Achievement Data**
    - 1996-97 grade levels of students who entered the Developmental Program in the 1991-92 school year from the records of K - 5 schools
    - Scores on the ITBS in fourth grade of students who entered the Developmental Program in the 1991-92 school year (along with data regarding students who did not take the ITBS) from records of K - 5 schools

3. **Satisfaction Data**

    Attitudes toward the program from (1) a survey of elementary principals with Developmental Programs, (2) a group meeting that includes all elementary principals with Developmental Programs, (3) a survey of 50% of first grade teachers randomly selected, (4) interviews with one Developmental Program teacher and one Reading Specialist from each section of the school division, and (5) a survey of 50% of parents of students currently and previously (1994-95) enrolled in the Developmental Program randomly selected

4. **Cost Data**

    Information from central office directors regarding costs of staffing, materials and supplies, and any other information associated with the Developmental Program.

ANALYSIS PROCEDURES:

1. Apply performance criteria once data is collected.
2. Perform a cost-benefit analysis based on achievement, satisfaction, and cost data to offer recommendations.

TIME LINE OF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Interview Project Personnel Document Goals and Objectives Review Literature	November 1996
Establish Research Questions/Objectives and Performance Criteria Begin Data Collection	November/December 1996
Analyze Data and Answer Research Questions Compare Performance with Criteria for Success	December 1996/January 1997
Report Findings and Recommendations	February 1997
Implement Recommendations	September 1997

A. Larry Stout
ADMINISTRATOR

Ouida Nuttle
TEAM LEADER

12/17/96
DATE

CHESAPEAKE
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Review of the Literature provides information related to the research which guided the data collection activities of the evaluation.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1950's, there developed a widespread notion that America was losing the race to space and that a lax educational system was to blame. As a result, schools in general began adopting more difficult curricula. Elementary schools were no exception, adding requirements to the primary program that had previously been reserved for older children. For example, the entire second grade curriculum eventually was moved to first grade. Some children at the first grade-level, despite their chronological age, were not physically, emotionally, and/or socially (developmentally) ready for higher academic expectations. These students especially were not ready to learn in one year what had been taught in two years (Connell 1987). The more rigorous standards, however, remained in place, and by the 1980's the number of student retentions in kindergarten or first grade surpassed the number of retentions in other grades (Wortham and Patton 1992).

Concerned educators began seeking ways to reduce the risk of failure for this group of children (and the accompanying damage to self-esteem which educational literature predicted would occur) (Connell 1987). One solution for many school divisions, including Chesapeake, has been to provide students with a year after kindergarten in classrooms referred to as "transitional" or "developmental" programs. After completion of the transitional year, students enter the regular first grade.

Implementation of the Developmental Program in Chesapeake was a response to the requests of principals of primary programs who each year had a group of kindergartners not ready for regular first grade. In 1985-86 the Developmental Program was initiated in three pilot sites (Butts Road, Deep Creek, and Park elementary schools). Based on satisfaction with the pilot programs, the Developmental Program was fully implemented in the 1990-91 school year. Today eighteen primary programs have all-day, full-year Developmental Programs, serving a total of 212 students.

WHAT IS THE CHESAPEAKE DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM?

The Developmental Program is designed to provide a year between kindergarten and first grade for the average or above-average student who is not ready for regular first grade. Unreadiness is generally characterized by physical, emotional, and/or social immaturity. A student is recommended for the program by the kindergarten teacher after observations, other measures of performance, and the results of the Developmental Screening Checklist indicate a student is "unready" or "immature" for regular first-grade placement despite chronological age (see Appendices 2 and 3, pages 85 and 86). Qualification for the program is ultimately determined by a Developmental Screening Team which includes the kindergarten teacher, kindergarten and first-grade level chairpersons, guidance counselor, Developmental Program teacher, and principal. Enrollment is contingent upon the written consent of the parent.

The Developmental Program is designed to be a child-centered program which builds on the academic and social level of each student. Developmentally appropriate instruction is offered through an activity-oriented and discovery curriculum of communication skills, mathematics, social studies, science and health, art, music, and perceptual/motor skills. The typical classroom has sixteen or fewer students with one teacher and a four-hour teacher assistant. In contrast, the average number of students in a first-grade classroom is twenty-two without a teaching assistant.

WHAT DOES EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE SAY ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS?

Research confirms that kindergartners who were physically, emotionally, and/or socially immature did not thrive in the years after higher educational standards were imposed. Kindergarten and first-grade retentions increased, and concerned educators began seeking ways to prevent young children from failing. The transitional year of maturation time between kindergarten and first grade became one solution for assisting the developmentally unready (Connell 1987).

Despite the best intentions of practitioners, research has offered little support for the transitional year. Transitional programs require that an extra year be added to the primary program and therefore to the educational career. Many educators view this as another form of retention, and retention for any group rarely has been supported in the literature as improving student achievement (Ostrowski, 1994). These educators also fear that enrollment in the developmental program will establish a pattern of lowered expectations for students (Stroud 1992). School personnel who favor developmental programs maintain that the developmentally immature student would likely be retained at some point anyway. They are convinced that early retentions are less likely to lower self-esteem than later retentions. Practitioners also point out that there is a big difference between failing and being placed in a success-oriented program that provides time to mature. Researchers who have written favorably of developmental programs cite the positive effects on social growth and self-esteem. They also cite evidence of strong support among parents of children who participated in developmental programs. They concede, however, that the academic benefits of developmental programs are more controversial (Coletta 1991).

Other studies, however, have revealed that young children were aware that they were unable to move to first grade and were more apt to suffer loss of self-confidence than at-risk children who were promoted (Dennebaum and Kulberg 1994). A number of studies also found that developmental students did not perform as well or performed about the same on standardized achievement measures as developmentally unready children placed in the regular classroom (Stroud 1992). Dennebaum and Kulberg concluded in their recent study (1994) that their results were consistent with much of the current research regarding developmental programs. They found that children in a developmental classroom did not perform as well as children who were recommended for an extra-year program but went to first grade anyway. Children placed in a developmental classroom, however, outperformed children retained in kindergarten

Researchers from both sides of the issue have indicated that the real educational problem has been a primary program with an emphasis on workbooks, worksheets, and lock-step instruction. They point out that the kindergarten curriculum which evolved in the reform movement of the late 1950's created expectations for achievement beyond the reach of many young children (Stroud 1992). These researchers cite an increase among kindergartners in negative attitudes toward learning, aggressive behavior, and damaged self-esteem at a time when the major curriculum goal should be to foster a love of learning (Coletta 1991).

The National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) agrees that resources and energy should be applied to making the primary program more developmentally appropriate. Representatives of NAECS/SDE advocate organizing all primary classrooms around characteristics previously reserved for the transitional classroom, including (1) teaching methodology that corresponds to a student's current developmental stage, (2) teaching that consists of hands-on techniques with "play" as a means of learning rather than worksheets and workbooks, (3) a stimulating environment that allows space for movement, capitalizing on children's natural inclination to learn through the use of learning centers, and above all (4) a classroom filled with children enjoying the learning experience because differences are welcomed (Grant 1991).

Representatives of NAECS/SDE also go so far as to suggest that equity may be compromised by screening certain students out of regular first grade and into transitional programs. The "unready" are often students who have never attended preschool, who have birthdays in the quarter just prior to entrance, who enter kindergarten despite testing to the contrary, or who are boys (Stroud 1992).

Educators generally agree that providing a developmentally appropriate curriculum in kindergarten and regular first grade is a worthwhile goal (Coletta 1991). Opponents of developmental programs believe the programs impede progress toward this goal. If developmental programs did not exist, they say, efforts would be made to ensure the success of "late bloomers" in kindergarten and first grade (Ostrowski 1994). The few proponents of developmental programs note that it likely will require time to produce developmentally appropriate curricula which offer a variety of experiences (e.g., discovery science projects, activity-oriented social studies units, field trips, and experience charts) given the need for teacher training and smaller class sizes (Coletta 1991).

WHAT CAN BE CONCLUDED FROM THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE?

The following advantages and disadvantages of developmental programs emerge from the literature review:

ADVANTAGES:

The Developmental Program

- has been shown to have positive effects on social growth and self-esteem
- is viewed as an alternative to grade retention in later grades
- can serve as a model of an appropriate curriculum for all kindergarten and first-grade students
- results in a more homogeneous first-grade classroom
- relieves the pressure on kindergarten teachers to get all children ready for first grade

- removes the unpleasant issue of grade retention for very young children
- is viewed positively by parents of developmentally immature children

DISADVANTAGES:

The Developmental Program

- is a form of retention because the majority of children remain in the public schools an additional year
- has not been shown to produce academic benefits
- can become a program primarily for children with low abilities and emotional problems
- can impede progress toward the goal of creating appropriate curricula for all students by offering an alternative to those children who "cannot make it"
- ignores curriculum changes in the past five years such as literature-based reading instruction, manipulative materials in mathematics instruction, and other intervention programs for regular first-grade children

Based on this review of the literature, the majority of educators do not favor developmental programs in spite of the discussed advantages. Although researchers acknowledge that children experience some social and emotional successes as a result of participation, they consider the evidence of academic success to be minimal. **Alternative recommendations include providing multiage grouping, an ungraded primary program, or extra help in the regular classroom in the form of peer or adult tutoring. It is argued that these strategies along with an appropriate curriculum focus on how to make the school ready for children rather than how to make children ready for school**.

The absence of such alternatives is not viewed as being due to a lack of sensitivity on the part of practitioners. Rather, a rigorous curriculum has remained because the public demand for high educational standards is at least as great now as in the 1950's, albeit for different reasons (e.g., perceptions of a poorly trained work force) (Ostrowski 1994). In the past ten years, developmental programs have provided a way to shelter from failure the unready members of an increasingly diverse population of kindergartners while meeting public demands for high standards.

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS

SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS

This section provides the results of the formal survey of all principals with developmental programs and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY: Surveys were sent in December 1996 to the 19 principals of elementary schools with developmental programs (1 kindergarten and 18 first-grade programs) to gather information regarding the student selection process and to determine the attitudes of principals toward the program. Nineteen responses were received for a return rate of 100%.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. The Developmental Program
    - serves academically able students who are not ready for first grade
    - enrolls students in all schools based on a standard selection process

2. At least 75% of administrators surveyed recommend the Developmental Program over other alternative programs.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY: See Chart 6, pages 30-32.

FINDINGS:

The "comments" section under each finding relates to comments written on the survey.

1. **Fifty-three percent** of principals said the Developmental Program at their school serves students of average or above-average academic ability who are not socially, emotionally, and/or physically ready for first grade.
   Eleven percent of principals said that students of below-average academic ability were served by the program.
   Twenty-one percent of principals said that students with varying abilities with developmental, academic, and/or behavior problems were served by the program
   Eleven percent said that "other" students were served by the program.

   COMMENTS:
   One principal commented that the goal is to enroll students of average or above-average ability who are developmentally young but that invariably a few students are less capable and/or have behavior problems.

2. **Ninety-five percent** of principals said the program in their school is serving the appropriate population of students.

   COMMENTS:
   One principal (appointed in the last three years) commented that the children placed in the Developmental Program did not fit the profile established in the guidelines for the program. Students are below average and were placed in the program because of behavior problems.

   One principal noted that her Developmental Program is serving kindergarten students to

CHART 6
SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS

SURVEY QUESTION				PERCENTAGE
1.	This is an Administrative survey.			
2.	Which best describes the population of students in the Developmental Program at your school?	A.	Students of average or above average academic ability who are not socially, emotionally, and/or physically ready for first grade	53%
		B.	Students of below average academic ability who are not likely to be successful in regular first grade	11%
		C.	Students with academic abilities ranging from below average to above average who are not ready for first grade because of developmental, academic and/or behavior problems	21%
		D.	Other	11%
		BLANK		4%
3.	In your opinion, is the program in your school serving the appropriate population of students?	A.	Yes	95%
		B.	No	5%
4.	Who recommends a student for the Developmental Program initially?	A.	K Teacher	84%
		B.	Administrator	5%
		C.	Parent	0%
		D.	Reading Specialist	0%
		E.	Child Study Team	5%
		BLANK		6%
5.	What screening device is used for the initial recommendation?	A.	A checklist of behaviors designed by professionals at the school	26%
		B.	A standardized checklist of behaviors for use by all schools	47%
		C.	Other	21%
		BLANK		6%
6.	Does the selection process at your school involve evaluation of student eligibility by a team of school professionals?	A.	Yes	95%
		B.	No	5%

SURVEY QUESTIONS			PERCENTAGE
7. Does the evaluation of students for the Developmental Program at your school include a means for determining if factors such as a need for special education are involved?	A.	Yes	84%
	B.	No	16%
8. How are parents notified that their child has been recommended to the Developmental Program?	A.	Telephone Call from Principal	0%
	B.	Conference with Principal	5%
	C.	Letter to Parents Written by the Principal	47%
	D.	Form Letter (For Use by All Schools) Signed by Principal	21%
	E.	Other	21%
	BAD ENTRY		6%
9. What percentage of students in the Developmental Program at your school go directly to second grade?	A.	0%	47%
	B.	1-10%	42%
	C.	11-20%	5%
	D.	21-30%	5%
	E.	Over 30%	0%
	BLANK		1%
10. What percentage of students in the Developmental Program at your school go to special education?	A.	0%	42%
	B.	1-10%	53%
	C.	11-20%	0%
	D.	21-30%	0%
	E.	Over 30%	0%
	BLANK		5%
11. In your opinion, does the Developmental Program provide for greater emotional and social success for enrollees than a regular first grade?	A.	Yes	95%
	B.	No	5%
12. In your opinion, does the Developmental Program provide for greater academic success for enrollees than regular first grade?	A.	Yes	95%
	B.	No	5%
13. In your experience, has adding another year to the education of developmental students produced negative effects to self-esteem?	A.	Yes	11%
	B.	No	89%

	SURVEY QUESTIONS			PERCENTAGE
14.	Do you view the Developmental Program as a means to prevent student retention in later grades?	A.	Yes	84%
		B.	No	16%
15.	Does the Developmental Program in your school serve as a model of an appropriate curriculum for kindergarten and regular first grade?	A.	Yes	63%
		B.	No	32%
		BLANK		5%
16.	In your opinion, are the kindergarten and first grade curricula more developmentally appropriate (i.e., include more discovery projects, hands-on techniques, and activity-oriented learning) today than five years ago?	A.	Yes	89%
		B.	No	5%
		BLANK		6%
17.	In your opinion, are the original goals and objectives of the Developmental Program still relevant today?	A.	Yes	79%
		B.	No	21%
18.	Based on feedback from parents of students in the Developmental Program, what is their level of satisfaction with the program?	A.	Very Satisfied	68%
		B.	Satisfied	26%
		C.	Not Satisfied	5%
		BLANK		1%
19.	Do you recommend the Developmental Program over other intervention programs for primary students?	A.	Yes	68%
		B.	No	26%
		BLANK		6%
20.	Are other intervention programs available that could serve developmental children as well or better?	A.	Yes	42%
		B.	No	42%
		BLANK		16%
21.	What is your level of satisfaction with the Developmental Program at your school?	A.	Very Satisfied	68%
		B.	Satisfied	21%
		C.	Not Satisfied	11%

provide an earlier intervention. This program does not automatically add an extra school year since the program is designed to prepare students for first-grade placement.

3. **Eighty-four percent** of principals said the kindergarten teacher recommends a student for the Developmental Program initially.

4. **Forty-seven percent** of principals said a standardized checklist of behaviors for use by all schools is used for the initial recommendation.
   Twenty-six percent said they use a checklist of behaviors designed by professionals at the school.
   Twenty-one percent said they use some "other" type of screening device.

   COMMENTS:
   Written comments indicate that some schools use a combination of standardized checklists and school-designed checklists.

5. **Ninety-five percent** of principals said the selection process involves evaluation of student eligibility by a team of school professionals.

6. **Eighty-four percent** of principals said evaluations of students for eligibility include a means for determining if factors such as a need for special education are involved.

7. **Twenty-one percent** of principals said a letter designed for use by all schools and signed by the principal is used to notify parents that their child has been recommended for the Developmental Program.
   Forty-seven percent said they use a letter written by the principal.
   Five percent said they hold a conference to notify parents.
   Twenty-one percent said they use some "other" type of notification.

   COMMENTS:
   Written comments indicate that some principals use a combination of conferences and letters to notify parents.

8. **Forty-two percent** of principals said from **1 - 10%** of students go directly to second grade.
   Five percent said **11 - 20%** go directly to second grade.
   Five percent said **21 - 30%** go directly to second grade.
   Forty-seven percent said **no** developmental students go to second grade.

   COMMENTS:
   One principal noted that they have just begun recommending students for second grade and that some parents have opted for first-grade placement instead.

9. **Fifty-three percent** of principals said **1 - 10%** of students go to special education. The remainder said no students go to special education.

10. **Ninety-five percent** of principals said the Developmental Program provides for greater emotional and social success for enrollees than a regular first grade.

11. **Ninety-five percent** of principals said the Developmental Program provides for greater academic success for enrollees than regular first grade.

COMMENTS:
One principal commented that children would not be as successful in a regular first-grade classroom while another went so far as to say that over 90% of the students would be retained in regular first grade if they did not enroll first in the Developmental Program.

12. **Eighty-nine percent** of principals said that adding another year to the education of developmental students did not produce negative effects to self-esteem.

13. **Eighty-four percent** of principals view the Developmental Program as a means to prevent student retention in later grades.

14. **Sixty-three percent** of principals said the program serves as a model of an appropriate curriculum for kindergarten and regular first grade.

15. **Eighty-nine percent** of principals said the kindergarten and first-grade curricula are more developmentally appropriate (i.e., include more discovery projects, hands-on techniques, and activity-oriented learning) today than five years ago.

16. **Seventy-nine percent** of principals said the original goals and objectives of the Developmental Program are still relevant today.

COMMENTS:
Several principals said that with the new reading series and a philosophy for first grade that is more developmentally appropriate, there is less need for the Developmental Program because these students could be successful in a regular first-grade classroom. Several principals also said the rollback in the cutoff date for entering school (from five years old by December 30 to September 30) has decreased the number of developmentally immature students.

17. **Sixty-eight percent** of principals said parents are **very satisfied** with the Developmental Program. **Twenty-six percent** are **satisfied**, and **five percent** are **not satisfied.**

18. **Sixty-eight percent** of principals said they recommend the Developmental Program over other intervention programs for primary students.

COMMENTS:
One principal (appointed in the last three years) commented that the children placed in the Developmental Program do not fit the profile established in the guidelines for the program. This principal said the students could have been served better as kindergarten retentions or in regular first grade with support from the Reading Specialist or the Child Study Team.

A principal noted that although Reading Recovery is helpful in developing strategies for reading, it does not address the developmental issue of maturity.

19. **Forty-two percent** of principals said there are other intervention programs available that could serve developmental children as well or better. **Forty-two percent** said there are no other intervention programs available.

COMMENTS:
Several principals said there are no other programs available to serve developmental students.

Other principals mentioned a number of alternatives including Reading Recovery, use of the Reading Specialist, Title I programs, the Developmental K program, and referral to the Child Study Team. Others suggested regular first-grade placement because of the more developmentally appropriate curriculum and the rollback in the cutoff date for entering school.

One principal expressed a preference for an even earlier intervention program such as the Head Start preschool program for four-year-olds while another expressed a preference for a program with a low teacher/student ratio to serve at-risk students.

20. **Sixty-eight percent** of principals are very satisfied with the Developmental Program at their school.
Twenty-one percent are satisfied.
Eleven percent are not satisfied.

COMMENTS:
One principal expressed satisfaction with the teacher and the population of students served but "worries" about the issue of automatic retention for most students of the program, especially now that the curriculum in regular first grade has become more developmentally appropriate.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The population of students served varies among the developmental programs divisionwide, but the population being served is considered appropriate by most principals.
    - Only about **half** of the Developmental Programs are serving just the targeted population (defined in the Developmental Program documents as children of average

or above average academic ability who are not socially, emotionally, and/or physically ready for first grade).

- **Ninety-five percent** of principals, however, said they believe the appropriate population is being served. This may indicate that a number of principals perceive a need for a program that serves a variety of students (or in some cases a different population of students).

2. Changes in the past five years have affected the nature of the Developmental Program today. According to survey responses or comments of principals:
   - The rollback in the cutoff date for entering school has reduced the number of very young students entering kindergarten.
   - Recent changes to the curriculum have rendered kindergarten and first-grade programs more developmentally appropriate (i.e., activity-oriented learning) according to **89%** of principals surveyed.
   - Other intervention programs are available which could serve students in the Developmental Program as well or better (based on survey responses of almost half the principals).
   - Nearly half of the principals have amended the original goals and objectives of the program to accommodate other types of students.

3. The Developmental Program is in essence a retention program because it adds a year to a child's education.
   - The student who "catches up" and moves to second grade is the exception rather than the rule according to **89%** of principals.

4. Only a small percentage of students in the Developmental Program require special education services after completing the program.
   - According to **95%** of principals, very few students enter special education programs after the Developmental Program.

5. Satisfaction with the program among principals is high.
   - A high percentage of principals are very satisfied **(68%)** or satisfied **(21%)** with the Developmental Program at their school.
   - The Developmental Program is viewed by principals as preferable to first-grade placement for the emotional, social, and academic success of students. Satisfaction is indicated by the high percentages of positive survey responses related to these three areas.

6. Principals consider parental satisfaction with the program to be high.
   - Principals' indicate that parental satisfaction is similar to their own (**94%** said parents are satisfied or very satisfied).

7. Most principals recommend the Developmental Program over other alternative programs.
    - Although **sixty-eight percent** of principals recommend the Developmental Program over other alternative programs, this percentage does not meet the criterion of **seventy-five percent** established in the Evaluation Proposal.

8. The selection and notification process varies among developmental programs divisionwide.
    - Almost all principals indicate that the kindergarten teacher makes the initial recommendation, that a team of professionals evaluates student eligibility, and that a means for screening out other mitigating factors such as special education is part of the selection process.
    - Less than half of the schools, however, use a standardized checklist of behaviors and a standardized letter to notify parents.
    - Comments of principals indicate that in general schools use a professional approach to selection and notification. Lack of standardization in the areas noted, however, appears to have resulted in some inconsistency in program implementation within the school division which may be due to variations in the communities served.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Give principals greater flexibility within guidelines to use the teaching position and teaching assistant position for interventions suitable for their population of students.

2. Explore the possibility of shifting the focus of the teaching position/teaching assistant position from a "retention" program to a program designed to keep children on grade level.

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

GROUP MEETING WITH PRINCIPALS

GROUP MEETING WITH PRINCIPALS

This section provides the results of the meeting with principals of elementary schools with the developmental programs to discuss the program.

GROUP MEETING WITH PRINCIPALS

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: On January 13, 1997, members of the Program Evaluation Team met with 14 principals of elementary schools with Developmental Programs. The intent of the meeting was to discuss the Developmental Program so that principals could share information regarding the program with the team and with each other. Four questions were discussed in the meeting, first by three small groups of principals and then by the entire group.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. The Developmental Program
   - serves academically able students who are not ready for first grade
   - enrolls students in all schools based on a standard selection process
2. At least 75% of administrators recommend the Developmental Program over other alternative programs.

RESULTS OF THE GROUP MEETING:
See Appendix 4, pages 87-89.

FINDINGS:

1. **Are the original goals and objectives of the Developmental Program still relevant today?**
   - When the three groups of principals reported the results of their discussions, they all agreed that the original goals and objectives of the program are relevant today.
   - In the large-group discussion, principals cited the fact that many of the students of the program lack support at home and benefit from the emotional support of the Developmental Program.
   - One principal noted that some Developmental Program students may never be on track academically.
   - In the large-group discussion, some principals suggested that (1) the rollback in the cutoff date for entering school (from five years old by December 30 to September 30) and (2) the new reading program which has made the curriculum in first grade more developmentally appropriate may have affected the relevance of the program today.
   - Principals appointed to the position within the past three years appeared to be less clear about the goals and objectives of the program.

2. **What does the Developmental Program offer that the regular first grade does not?**
   - The three groups reported that the Developmental Program offers benefits not available in the first-grade classroom, including more individual attention because of a lower teacher/student ratio and a teaching assistant, more hands-on learning, and a more flexible curriculum.
   - When questioned as to any disadvantages, principals mentioned that (1) there is no designated curriculum for the Developmental Program, (2) some parents refuse to enroll their children in the program, and (3) in some cases problems seem to resurface

in fourth grade with parents expressing regret over choosing the Developmental Program if another retention is considered.

- In response to questions regarding the retention issue, one principal noted that factors such as age and physical size are considered before recommending a child to the program. Another principal commented that although the program adds another year to the education of the child, students are not repeating the curriculum since the Developmental Program has its own materials. One principal, however, said the retention issue is troublesome.

3. **What is the level of satisfaction with the program among parents, teachers, and administrators?**
    - The three groups reported that parents appear to be satisfied with the program although they agreed that parents sometimes forget that moving to regular first grade, not second grade, is the expectation. Some parents must be encouraged to enroll children in the program.
    - Principals reported that teachers in general are satisfied with the program but that teachers who have a combined class of first graders and students of the Developmental Program are not as satisfied.
    - Principals indicated that they are satisfied with the program. One principal commented, however, that he would rather eliminate the program than have a combined Developmental Program and first-grade class.

4. **What other programs would work in place of the current Developmental Program?**
    - One of the three groups reported that the more developmentally appropriate first-grade curriculum in some schools combined with the rollback in the cutoff date for entering school may make first-grade placement an option for students.
    - Another group reported that a full-day kindergarten would be needed if there is no Developmental Program. This group also suggested Reading Recovery as a support program (not as a developmental program), multiage grouping, and a program which would be developed at the building level.
    - The third group suggested an early intervention kindergarten program.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Changes in the past five years have affected the nature of the Developmental Program today.
    - The rollback in the cutoff date for entering school has reduced the number of very young students entering kindergarten.
    - Recent changes to the curriculum have made kindergarten and first-grade programs more developmentally appropriate (i.e., activity-oriented learning).
    - A number of schools have been serving students who do not fit the profile of the "academically able but developmentally immature student" established in Developmental Program guidelines.

2. There are both advantages and disadvantages to placing a child in the Developmental Program instead of regular first grade.
    - Advantages include the opportunity for the child to have more time to grow developmentally, to receive more individual attention, and to experience a more flexible, activity-oriented curriculum.
    - Disadvantages include the lack of a designated Developmental Program curriculum, parental reluctance to enroll students in the program, the possibility of developmental problems resurfacing in later elementary years, and the issue of retention because an extra year is added to the education of the student.

3. Principals are of the opinion that in general all groups (parents, teachers, and administrators) are satisfied with the program.
    - Parents occasionally misunderstand that their child will be going to regular first grade not second grade after the Developmental Program and express dissatisfaction.
    - Teachers who have a combined class of Developmental Program students and regular first graders are not satisfied.

4. Although principals agree that the program is still relevant today, they also agree that there are alternatives to the Developmental Program.
    - Multiage grouping
    - Regular first-grade placement now that the kindergarten and first-grade curriculum are more developmentally appropriate
    - An early intervention kindergarten program
    - A full-day kindergarten program
    - Reading Recovery as a support program
    - A program serving a variety of students to be developed at the building level

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Give principals the flexibility within guidelines to use the teaching position/teaching assistant position for interventions that are suitable for their population of students.

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

SURVEY OF REGULAR FIRST-GRADE TEACHERS

SURVEY OF REGULAR FIRST-GRADE TEACHERS

This section provides the results of the formal survey of a random sample of regular first-grade teachers of the school division and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

SURVEY OF REGULAR FIRST-GRADE TEACHERS

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY: Surveys were sent in December 1996 to 50% of regular first-grade teachers (65) to obtain information regarding the students served and to determine their attitudes toward the program. Forty-two (42) responses were received for a return rate of 65%.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. The Developmental Program serves academically able students who are not ready for regular first grade.
2. At least 75% of teachers surveyed recommend the Developmental Program over other alternative programs.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY: See Chart 7, pages 44-45.

FINDINGS:

The "comments" section under each finding relates to comments written on the survey.

1. **Forty-eight percent** of regular first-grade teachers said the Developmental Program at their school serves students of average or above-average academic ability who are not socially, emotionally, and/or physically ready for first grade.

   Twenty-eight percent said students of below-average academic ability were served by the program.

   Twenty-four percent said students with varying abilities (developmental, academic, and/or behavior problems) were served by the program.

COMMENTS:

- A regular first-grade teacher said her school serves kindergartners in the Developmental Program. The lowest-achieving kindergarten students are selected and prepared for regular first grade. This teacher indicated that developmental programs which serve first-grade students are used primarily to avoid retaining kindergartners who do not have the academic skills required for regular first-grade placement. She said, "...by helping these kids from the start, we can prevent them from gaining a year in their education."
- A teacher noted that students are appropriately placed in the Developmental Program at her school but added that many more students go to regular first grade who could benefit from the program.

2 **Sixty percent** of teachers said the program is serving the appropriate population of students.

COMMENTS:

- Several teachers said the program is serving the developmentally immature student at their schools.

CHART 7
SURVEY OF REGULAR FIRST-GRADE TEACHERS

	SURVEY QUESTION			PERCENTAGE
1.	This is a Teacher survey.			
2.	Which best describes the population of students in the Developmental Program at your school?	A.	Students of average or above average academic ability who are not socially, emotionally, and/or physically ready for first grade	48%
		B.	Students of below average academic ability who are not likely to be successful in regular first grade	28%
		C.	Students with academic abilities ranging from below average to above average who are not ready for first grade because of developmental, academic and/or behavior problems	24%
		D.	Other	0%
3.	In your opinion, is the program in your school serving the appropriate population of students?	A.	Yes	60%
		B.	No	40%
4.	What percentage of students in the Developmental Program at your school go directly to second grade?	A.	0%	67%
		B.	1-10%	31%
		C.	11-20%	0%
		D.	21-30%	0%
		E.	Over 30%	2%
5.	What percentage of students in the Developmental Program at your school go to special education?	A.	0%	36%
		B.	1-10%	52%
		C.	11-20%	5%
		D.	21-30%	0%
		E.	Over 30%	5%
		BLANK		2%
6.	In your opinion, does the Developmental Program provide for greater emotional and social success for enrollees than a regular first grade?	A.	Yes	98%
		B.	No	2%

SURVEY QUESTION		PERCENTAGE
7. In your opinion, does the Developmental Program provide for greater academic success for enrollees than regular first grade?	A. Yes	83%
	B. No	14%
	BLANK	3%
8. In your experience, has adding another year to the education of developmental students produced negative effects to self-esteem?	A. Yes	5%
	B. No	95%
9. Do you view the Developmental Program as a means to prevent student retention in later grades?	A. Yes	83%
	B. No	17%
10. Does the Developmental Program in your school serve as a model of an appropriate curriculum for kindergarten and regular first grade?	A. Yes	93%
	B. No	7%
11. In your opinion, are the kindergarten and first grade curricula more developmentally appropriate (i.e., include more discovery projects, hands-on techniques, and activity-oriented learning) today than five years ago?	A. Yes	81%
	B. No	17%
	BLANK	2%
12. In your opinion, are the original goals and objectives of the Developmental Program still relevant today?	A. Yes	86%
	B. No	14%
13. Based on feedback from parents of students in the Developmental Program, what is their level of satisfaction with the program?	A. Very Satisfied	62%
	B. Satisfied	36%
	C. Not Satisfied	2%
14. Do you recommend the Developmental Program over other intervention programs for primary students.	A. Yes	74%
	B. No	24%
	BLANK	2%
15. Are other intervention programs available that could serve developmental children as well or better?	A. Yes	14%
	B. No	86%
16. What is your level of satisfaction with the developmental program at your school?	A. Very Satisfied	64%
	B. Satisfied	29%
	C. Not Satisfied	7%

- One teacher said the Developmental Program is crucial because she is seeing more and more children who are not developmentally, socially, and/or academically ready for regular first grade.
- One teacher commented that the Developmental Program is not being used as intended because teachers do not have a clear understanding of the profile of the developmental student.
- Another teacher said students in the program at her school are below average in academic ability due to the philosophy of the previous administration.
- One teacher noted that proper screening of students is essential.

3. **Sixty-seven percent** of teachers said no students go directly to second grade.
Thirty-one percent said 1-10% go directly to second grade.
Two percent said over 30% go directly to second grade.

4. **Fifty-two percent** of teachers said 1-10% of students in the Developmental Program at their school go to special education.
Thirty-six percent said 0% of students go to special education.
Five percent said 11-20% of students go to special education.
Five percent said over 30% of students go to special education.

5. **Ninety-eight percent** of teachers said the program provides for greater emotional and social success for enrollees than a regular first grade.

6. **Eighty-three percent** of teachers said the program provides for greater academic success for enrollees than regular first grade.

COMMENTS:
One teacher said it is too difficult to differentiate between developmental immaturity and learning or emotional impairment at such an early age.

7. **Ninety-five percent** of teachers said adding another year to the education of developmental students **did not** produce negative effects to self-esteem.

COMMENTS:
Several teachers indicated the program helps students' self-esteem.

8. **Eighty-three percent** of teachers said the program is viewed as a means to prevent student retention in later grades.

9. **Ninety-three percent** of teachers said the program serves as a model of an appropriate curriculum for kindergarten and regular first grade.

10. **Eighty-one percent** of teachers said the kindergarten and first-grade curricula are more developmentally appropriate today than five years ago.

11. **Eighty-six percent** of teachers said the original goals and objectives of the program are still relevant today.

12. **Sixty-two percent** of teachers said parents are very satisfied with the program.

    COMMENTS:
    A teacher commented that the most difficult task is convincing parents that their child is not being retained but is being given a year to grow.

13. **Seventy-four percent** of teachers recommend the program over other intervention programs for primary students.

14. **Eighty-six percent** of teachers said that there are no other intervention programs available that could serve developmental children as well or better.

    COMMENTS:
    One teacher said no other programs offer the extra year of growth. She noted that Reading Recovery should not be offered to developmental students. Several teachers, however, mentioned Reading Recovery as an option in the area of language arts.

    Another teacher suggested individualized instruction in kindergarten and regular first grade with the use of Chapter 1 inclusion techniques to help developmental students going on to regular first grade.

15. **Ninety-three percent** of teachers said they are satisfied or very satisfied with the program at their school.

    COMMENTS:
    - A teacher said the program should be made uniform throughout the school division rather than being operated according to the philosophy of the administration of each school. She expressed dissatisfaction with the split class of developmental students and first graders (she believes a full class of developmental students could have been formed).

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The population of students served varies among the developmental programs divisionwide.
    - Less than half **(48%)** of the regular first-grade teachers surveyed said the Developmental Program is serving just the targeted population (defined in the Developmental Program documents as children of average or above-average

academic ability who are not socially, emotionally, and/or physically ready for first grade).

2. The majority of first-grade teachers surveyed are of the opinion that the program is serving the appropriate population.
   - **Sixty percent** of regular first-grade teachers said the Developmental Program is serving the appropriate population of students.

3. Regular first-grade teachers consider the original goals and objectives of the Developmental Program to be relevant today.
   - **Eighty-six percent** of teachers said the original goals and objectives are still relevant today (despite the fact that over half indicate the program serves students who do not fit the established profile).
   - **Eighty-six percent** of teachers also said there are no other intervention programs available to serve developmental children as well as the Developmental Program.
   - Regular first-grade teachers apparently consider the program relevant in its current form because the program addresses the problems of a variety of types of students before they enter the first-grade classroom. Support from this group for the program may also result from a perception that there are currently few alternatives available for these students.

4. **Eighty-one percent** of teachers said the kindergarten and first-grade curricula are more developmentally appropriate today than five years ago.
   - Comments suggest that regular first-grade teachers continue to support the concept of the Developmental Program despite the curricula changes.

5. Most regular first-grade teachers recommend the Developmental Program over other intervention programs for primary students.
   - **Seventy-four percent** of teachers recommend the Developmental Program over alternative programs (this is one percent below the performance criterion for success established in the Evaluation Proposal).

6. The Developmental Program is in essence a retention program because it adds a year to a child's education.
   - The student who "catches up" and moves to second grade is the exception rather than the rule according to **98%** of regular first-grade teachers.

7. Only a small percentage of students in the Developmental Program require special education services after completing the program.
   - According to **88%** of regular first-grade teachers, very few students enter special education programs after the Developmental Program.

8. Satisfaction with the Developmental Program among regular first-grade teachers is high.

- **Ninety-three percent** of teachers are satisfied or very satisfied with the program.
- Regular first-grade teachers are of the opinion that the Developmental Program provides for greater emotional, social, and academic success than regular first grade. Satisfaction is indicated by the high percentages of positive survey responses related to these three areas.
- **Ninety-three percent** of teachers consider the Developmental Program to be a model of an appropriate curriculum for kindergarten and regular first grade.
- A few teachers are dissatisfied with the lack of uniformity in the program divisionwide.

9. The majority of regular first-grade teachers believe parents are satisfied with the Developmental Program.
    - **Sixty-two percent** of teachers said that parents are satisfied with the Developmental Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Within guidelines, redefine the "developmental program" based on (a) changes in students served and (b) changes in the kindergarten and first-grade curricula in the past five years.

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

MEETING WITH DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM TEACHERS AND READING SPECIALISTS

MEETING WITH DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM TEACHERS AND READING SPECIALISTS

This section provides the results of the meeting held to discuss the Developmental Program with a random sample of developmental teachers and reading specialists.

MEETING WITH DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM TEACHERS AND READING SPECIALISTS

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING:

On January 14, 1997, members of the Program Evaluation Team met with five Developmental Program teachers and five Reading Specialists who had been randomly selected from the five sections of the school division. Developmental Program teachers were from Hickory, Southwestern, Deep Creek Central, Norfolk Highlands, and Portlock elementary schools. Reading Specialists were from Camelot, Rena B. Wright, Cedar Road, Chittum, and Georgetown elementary schools. The intent of the meeting was to discuss the Developmental Program so that teachers and Reading Specialists could share information regarding the program with the evaluation team and with each other.

PERFORMANCE CRITERION FOR SUCCESS:

1. The Developmental Program serves academically able students who are not ready for first grade.

2. Developmental teachers and Reading Specialists express satisfaction with the Developmental Program

RESULTS OF THE GROUP MEETING:

See Appendix 5, pages 90-91, for questions asked and responses from the teachers and reading specialists.

FINDINGS:

1. **What is the profile of the student in the Developmental Program?**
    - One reading specialist said students are well below the criteria of "mastering 80% of kindergarten skills" and that the students would be better served in kindergarten.
    - A teacher said that their school screens carefully to ensure that the student profile established in the guidelines is followed--bright but immature students. She noted, however, that it is difficult to get parental permission for placement in the Developmental Program and that they presently have nine students. This teacher had the opportunity to teach students while they were in the Developmental Program and then in third grade and found them to be very well behaved.
    - Another teacher indicated that their school has a good screening process. They now have twelve students who fit the established profile.
    - The teacher of a combined Developmental Program and first-grade class (five developmental students and fifteen of the top students in regular first grade) considers this an impossible situation. She noted that children with behavior problems and in need of medication are enrolled in the Developmental Program because there is no other place to put them.

2. **What are the advantages for students who enroll in the Developmental Program?**
   - A reading specialist who previously taught in the Developmental Program said the program builds self-esteem.
   - A teacher said many of her previous students have entered the gifted and talented program.
   - A teacher said the Developmental Program allows more time for growth.
   - A teacher said regular first-grade teachers will complain if a developmental student is placed in first grade.

3. **What are the disadvantages for students who enroll in the program?**
   - Several teachers commented that adding another year to the developmental student's education is seen as a disadvantage by some parents.
   - A reading specialist relayed a message from the teachers at her school which indicates that the Developmental Program in its current form is seen as a disadvantage to students and teachers. These teachers have two complaints regarding the operation of the Developmental Program. First, they believe they cannot adequately serve two groups of students when the Developmental Program is combined with one of the regular first-grade classes. Teachers said they would rather divide the students from the Developmental Program among the regular first-grade teachers and use inclusion techniques to work with them. Second, teachers are concerned that some developmental programs are serving a variety of types of students including lower-achieving students, students with behavior problems, and/or students with disabilities. Teachers emphasize that the original intent was to serve academically able students who are developmentally immature. Teachers said that if the program cannot be run according to the program guidelines, they would rather not have the program.
   - A reading specialist who was involved in the Developmental Program when it was initiated says the definition of the program has been changed to include students with academic difficulties which she sees as a disadvantage to all students in the program.
   - A teacher said her principal supports the concept of the Developmental Program, but the program is used as a catch-all and includes students with disabilities. The teacher believes this is due in part to inappropriate evaluations by the kindergarten teachers.

4. **Would developmentally young students be served better by other programs?**
   - A teacher of a combined Developmental Program and first-grade class said that she thought some of the Reading Recovery techniques could be useful to all students.
   - A reading specialist emphasized that Reading Recovery and the Developmental Program address different needs.
   - All agreed that the kindergarten and first-grade curricula have become developmentally appropriate but said there is a reluctance among some teachers to change their traditional instructional methods.
   - Several teachers commented that the school division is moving toward a more developmentally appropriate curriculum (i.e., activity-oriented learning) but that there

is still too much traditional teaching, with teachers still "separating the readers into groups."

OTHER COMMENTS:

- A teacher said that she misses the sharing among teachers that occurred at the program's inception.
- A teacher said that the selection process should involve as many professionals as possible and that the process should not be rushed to ensure selection of the most appropriate population.
- A teacher said second-grade placement is not common because a student with potential would be removed from the Developmental Program and placed in regular first grade rather than waiting until the end of the year to promote the child to second grade.
- A reading specialist observed that there are usually two developmental students for each first-grade class in the school.
- A teacher said that if the program is not a truly developmental program, the name needs to be changed.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The profile of the student of the Developmental Program varies from school to school
   - Students with learning and behavior problems are being served along with academically able students who are developmentally immature.
   - Some kindergarten teachers are quick to recommend students for the Developmental Program which results in the various types of students in one class.

2. Advantages of the Developmental Program:
   - Students have the opportunity to grow developmentally.
   - Students experience an increase in self-esteem.
   - Some students become academically strong students in first grade.

3. Disadvantages of the Developmental Program:
   - Teachers are not satisfied with the current practice of mixing problem students into some classes labeled as "developmental."
   - Teachers are not satisfied with the current practice in some schools of splitting a first-grade class into a regular first-grade program and the Developmental Program.
   - Teachers do not feel the support of the school division as a group because of program inconsistency.
   - Some parents are concerned about adding a year to their children's education and are reluctant to enroll them in the program.

4. The kindergarten and first-grade curricula are now more appropriate for serving the

developmentally immature student, but teachers have not completed training in the use of the materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Establish guidelines that discourage the placement of a wide variety of students with problems in one class labeled as "developmental."

2. Establish guidelines that discourage splitting a first-grade class between a group of developmental students (5-6) and a group of first-grade students.

3. Provide extensive staff development to first-grade teachers in developmental teaching strategies that are in harmony with current curriculum and textbook changes.

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

SURVEY OF CURRENT PARENTS

SURVEY OF CURRENT PARENTS

This section provides the results of the formal survey of a random sample of parents of students in the 1996-97 Developmental Program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

SURVEY OF CURRENT PARENTS
(1996-97 DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM)

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY: One hundred and six (106) surveys were mailed in December 1996 to a random sample of parents of students of the 1996-97 Developmental Program to determine attitudes of parents of current students toward the program. Thirty-seven (37) surveys were received for a return rate of 34%.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. The Developmental Program
    - serves academically able students who are not ready for first grade
    - enrolls students in all schools based on a standard selection process

2. At least 75% of parents express satisfaction with the Developmental Program.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY: See Chart 8, pages 57-58, and Appendix 6, pages 92-95.

FINDINGS:

"Comments" sections of the findings relate to comments written on the survey.

1. **Sixty-five percent** of parents described their child who is in the Developmental Program as a student of average or above-average academic ability who was not ready for regular first grade after kindergarten.
   Twenty-seven percent described their child as a student of below-average academic ability who was not ready for regular first grade after kindergarten.
   Five percent responded "other."

   COMMENTS:
    - A parent whose son was identified as the "perfect candidate" for the program because he was bright but young said she was deeply disappointed by the program. Her son had to be removed from the class because most of the students had behavior and/or learning problems which prevented him from getting the academic attention he deserved. The parent suggested "that the criteria for recommending students to the program be clarified and that a curriculum be followed. There seems to be some misunderstanding about the criteria for entry into the program."
    - A parent who considers her son to be qualified for special education services commented that her son is not progressing well despite the fact that the teacher is "outstanding."

2. **Sixty-seven percent** of parents said they were notified that their child was recommended for the Developmental Program by a means "other" than a telephone call, conference, or letter from the principal.

CHART 8
SURVEY OF CURRENT PARENTS
(1996-97 Developmental Program)

SURVEY QUESTION			PERCENTAGE
1. This is a Parent survey.			
2. Which best describes your child who was in the Developmental Program?	A.	A student of average or above average academic ability who was not ready for regular first grade after kindergarten	65%
	B.	A student of below average academic ability who was not ready for regular first grade after kindergarten	27%
	C.	Other	5%
	BLANK		3%
3. How were you notified that your child was recommended for the Developmental Program?	A.	Telephone Call from Principal	3%
	B.	Conference with Principal	3%
	C.	Letter from Principal	27%
	D.	Other	67%
4. Were you informed in such a way that you had a clear understanding of the reason your child was being recommended for the program?	A.	Yes	97%
	B.	No	3%
5. Did you agree that placement in the Developmental Program instead of regular first grade was the best choice for your child?	A.	Yes	95%
	B.	No	5%
6. Now that your child has been in the Developmental Program for a semester, do you still agree that placing your child in the Developmental Program rather than regular first grade was the best choice?	A.	Yes	95%
	B.	No	5%
7. Describe your child's current reading level.	A.	Pre-reading activities	27%
	B.	Simple books	49%
	C.	First-grade books	24%

SURVEY QUESTION		PERCENTAGE
8. What is your child's overall level of academic performance in the Developmental Program?	A. Excellent	32%
	B. Good	57%
	C. Average	8%
	D. Poor	3%
9. What is your child's level of emotional and social progress in the Developmental Program?	A. Excellent	41%
	B. Good	51%
	C. Average	3%
	D. Poor	5%
10. What grade do you expect your child to enter next year?	A. Regular First Grade	73%
	B. Second Grade	19%
	C. Other	8%
11. Do you anticipate that your child will require special education services in the next grade after the Developmental Program?	A. Yes	22%
	B. No	76%
	BLANK	2%
12. How has participation in the Developmental Program affected your child's self-confidence?	A. Positively	97%
	B. Negatively	3%
13. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the Developmental Program?	A Very Satisfied	73%
	B. Satisfied	24%
	C. Not Satisfied	3%

3. **Ninety-seven percent** indicated they were informed of the recommendation in such a way that they had a clear understanding of the reasons for the recommendation.

4. **Ninety-five percent** agreed that placement in the Developmental Program was the best choice for their child at the time.

5. **Ninety-five percent** said they still (after one semester) believe that placing their child in the Developmental Program was the best choice.

6. **Forty-nine percent** of parents described their child's reading level while in the Developmental Program as "simple books."
   Twenty-seven percent described their child's reading level as "pre-reading activities."
   Twenty-four percent described their child's reading level as "first-grade books."

7. **Fifty-seven percent** of parents described their child's overall level of academic performance in the Developmental Program as "good."
   Thirty-two percent of parents described their child's overall level of academic performance as "excellent."
   Eight percent of parents described their child's overall level of academic performance as "average."
   Three percent of parents described the level of academic performance as "poor."

8. **Fifty-one percent** of parents described their child's level of emotional and social progress in the Developmental Program as "good."
   Forty-one percent described the progress as "excellent."
   Three percent described the progress as "average."
   Five percent described the progress as "poor."

9. **Seventy-three percent** of parents expect their child to enter regular first grade after the Developmental Program.
   Nineteen percent expect their child to enter second grade.

10. **Seventy-six percent** of parents said they do not anticipate their child receiving special education services in the next grade.
    Twenty-two percent of parents said they anticipate their child receiving special education services.

11. **Ninety-seven percent** of parents said participation in the program has affected their child's self-confidence in a positive way.
    Three percent said participation in the program has affected their child's self-confidence in a negative way.

12. **Seventy-three percent** of parents said they are "very satisfied" with the Developmental Program.
Twenty-four percent said they are "satisfied."
Three percent said they are "not satisfied."

COMMENTS:

- Most of the parents who commented were very satisfied with the program and cited benefits such as extra time to mature and develop, academic growth, and increased confidence. Positive comments also were attributed to good teaching and small class sizes.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The population of students served varies among developmental programs in the school division.
    - **Sixty-five percent** described their children according to the profile established for the program (i.e., average or above-average academic ability) while **thirty-two percent** said their children were below-average or "other."

2. Most parents agreed with the recommendation to place their children in the Developmental Program at the time and still agreed after one semester that placement in the program was the best choice.
    - **Ninety-five percent** agreed with placement in the program upon enrollment.
    - **Ninety-five percent** agreed with the decision after one semester.

3. Most parents consider the academic, emotional, and social progress of their children in the Developmental Program to be above average and the effects on self-esteem to be positive.
    - **Eighty-nine percent** said academic progress was good or excellent.
    - **Seventy-six percent** said the reading level at the time was beyond pre-reading activities (simple books or first-grade books).
    - **Ninety-two percent** said emotional and social progress was good or excellent.
    - **Ninety-seven percent** said participation in the Developmental Program affected their children's self-confidence in a positive way.

4. The Developmental Program is in essence a retention program because it adds a year to a child's education.
    - **Seventy-three percent** of parents expect their child to enter first grade next year.

5. A significant minority of parents **(22%)** expect that their child will require special education services after completing the program.

6. Satisfaction is high among parents of students of the 1996-97 Developmental Program.
    - **Ninety-seven percent** of parents said they are satisfied or very satisfied which

exceeds the performance criterion of **seventy-five percent** established in the Evaluation Proposal.

- Parental satisfaction with the program appears to be directly related to satisfaction with the Developmental Program teacher.

7. Parental notification regarding recommendation for the program usually was initiated by a school professional other than the principal, but most parents found the method of notification satisfactory.
   - **Thirty-three percent** of parents said they were notified by the principal with a telephone call, letter, or conference. **Sixty-seven percent** responded "other."
   - **Ninety-seven percent** said they were informed in such a way that they had a clear understanding of why their children were being recommended to the program

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Within guidelines, redefine the "developmental program" based on changes in the population of students served.

CHESAPEAKE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

SURVEY OF PAST PARENTS

SURVEY OF PAST PARENTS

This section provides the results of the formal survey of a random sample of parents of students in the 1994-95 Developmental Program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

SURVEY OF PAST PARENTS
(1994-95 DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM)

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY: Eighty-nine (89) surveys were mailed in December 1996 to a random sample of parents of students of the 1994-95 Developmental Program to determine the attitudes of parents of students previously enrolled in the program. These students are in the second grade this year. Twenty-nine (29) surveys were received for a return rate of 33%.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. The Developmental Program
   - serves academically able students who are not ready for first grade
   - enrolls students in all schools based on a standard selection process

2. At least 75% of parents express satisfaction with the Developmental Program.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY: See Chart 9, pages 64-65, and Appendix 7, pages 96-98.

FINDINGS:

"Comments" sections of the findings relate to comments written on the survey.

1. **Sixty-two percent** of parents described their child who was in the Developmental Program as a student of average or above-average academic ability who was not ready for regular first grade after kindergarten.
   Twenty-four percent described their child as a student of below-average academic ability.
   Fourteen percent responded "other."

   COMMENTS:

   - One dissatisfied parent said his child skipped kindergarten and was placed in the Developmental Program because of advanced achievement. This parent would have preferred to enroll his child in regular first grade. He also said, "teachers are unwilling to accept differences in children's temperaments and are too quick to recommend children for placement into the developmental program who do not belong there."

   - A parent who liked the program because of the expertise of the developmental teacher said he was put off initially by the recommendation of the kindergarten teacher who discussed placement before she had even met the child (the teacher based her recommendation on age, sex, and birth order of the child).

2. **Seventy-six percent** of parents said they were notified that their child was recommended for the Developmental Program by a means "other" than a telephone call, conference, or letter from the principal.

CHART 9
SURVEY OF PAST PARENTS
(1994-95 Developmental Program)

	SURVEY QUESTION			PERCENTAGE
1.	This is a Parent survey.			
2.	Which best describes your child who was in the Developmental Program?	A.	A student of average or above average academic ability who was not ready for regular first grade after kindergarten	62%
		B.	A student of below average academic ability who was not ready for regular first grade after kindergarten	24%
		C.	Other	14%
3.	How were you notified that your child was recommended for the Developmental Program?	A.	Telephone Call from Principal	0%
		B.	Conference with Principal	10%
		C.	Letter from Principal	14%
		D.	Other	76%
4.	Were you informed in such a way that you had a clear understanding of the reason your child was being recommended for the program?	A.	Yes	90%
		B.	No	10%
5.	Did you agree that placement in the Developmental Program instead of regular first grade was the best choice for your child?	A.	Yes	86%
		B.	No	10%
		BLANK		4%
6.	Now that your child has completed the Developmental Program, do you still agree that placing your child in the Developmental Program rather than regular first grade was the best choice?	A.	Yes	90%
		B.	No	10%
7.	Describe your child's reading level while in the Developmental Program	A.	Pre-reading activities	31%
		B.	Simple books	48%
		C.	First-grade books	21%

SURVEY QUESTION			PERCENTAGE
8. What was your child's overall level of academic performance in the Developmental Program?	A.	Excellent	41%
	B.	Good	48%
	C.	Average	10%
	D.	Poor	0%
	BLANK		1%
9. What was your child's level of emotional and social progress in the Developmental Program?	A.	Excellent	48%
	B.	Good	31%
	C.	Average	17%
	D.	Poor	3%
	BLANK		1%
10. To which grade did your child go the next year after the Developmental Program?	A.	Regular First Grade	97%
	B.	Second Grade	3%
	C.	Other	0%
11. Did your child receive special education services in the next grade after the Developmental Program?	A.	Yes	10%
	B.	No	90%
12. How has participation in the Developmental Program affected your child's self-confidence?	A.	Positively	90%
	B.	Negatively	7%
	BLANK		3%
13. What is your child's overall level of academic performance this year?	A.	Excellent	24%
	B.	Good	45%
	C.	Average	31%
	D.	Poor	0%
14. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the Developmental Program?	A.	Very Satisfied	72%
	B.	Satisfied	14%
	C.	Not Satisfied	14%

COMMENTS:

- Two parents said they were informed about placement of their children in the program only after the children had been enrolled.

3. **Ninety percent** indicated they were informed of the recommendation in such a way that they had a clear understanding of the reasons for the recommendation.

4. **Eighty-six percent** agreed that placement in the Developmental Program was the best choice for their child at the time.

5. **Ninety percent** say they still believe placing their child in the Developmental Program was the best choice.

6. **Forty-eight percent** of parents described their child's reading level while in the Developmental Program as "simple books."
Thirty-one percent described their child's reading level as "pre-reading activities."
Twenty-one percent described their child's reading level as "first-grade books."

7. **Forty-eight percent** of parents described their child's overall level of academic performance in the Developmental Program as "good."
Forty-one percent described their child's overall level of academic performance as "excellent."
Ten percent described their child's overall level of academic performance as "average."
None described the level of academic performance as "poor."

8. **Forty-eight percent** of parents described their child's level of emotional and social progress in the Developmental Program as "excellent."
Thirty-one percent described the progress as "good."
Seventeen percent described the progress as "average."
Three percent described the progress as "poor."

9. **Ninety-seven percent** of parents said their child went to the regular first grade after the Developmental Program.
Three percent said their child went to second grade.

10. **Ninety percent** of parents said their child did not receive special education services in the next grade.
Ten percent of parents said their child did receive special education services.

11. **Ninety percent** of parents said participation in the program has affected their child's self-confidence in a positive way.
Seven percent said participation in the program has affected their child's self-confidence in a negative way.

12. **Forty-five percent** of parents said their child's overall level of academic performance this year is "good."
Twenty-four percent said their child's overall level of academic performance this year is "excellent."
Thirty-one percent said their child's overall level of academic performance this year is "average."
None said their child's overall level of academic performance this year is "poor."

13. **Seventy-two percent** of parents said they are "very satisfied" with the Developmental Program.
Fourteen percent said they are "satisfied."
Fourteen percent said they are "not satisfied."

COMMENTS:

- The majority of parents who commented indicated they are pleased with the Developmental Program, and in most cases they praised the teacher for making the program a success.

- Parents who indicated dissatisfaction with the program gave a variety of reasons, including disappointment with the teacher, lack of knowledge of their child's enrollment until report cards were issued, and lack of progress in the program.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The population of students served varied among developmental programs in the school division in the 1994-95 school year.
    - **Sixty-two percent** of parents described their child according to the profile established for the program (i.e., average or above-average academic ability) while **thirty-eight percent** said their children were of below-average ability or "other."

2. Most parents agreed with the recommendation to place their children in the Developmental Program at the time and still agree that placement in the program was the best choice.
    - **Eighty-six percent** agreed with placement in the program upon enrollment.
    - **Ninety percent** agree with the decision today.

3. Most parents consider the academic, emotional, and social progress of their children while in the Developmental Program to have been above average and the effects on self-esteem positive.
    - **Eighty-nine percent** said academic progress was good or excellent.
    - **Sixty-nine percent** said the reading level at the time was beyond pre-reading activities (simple books or first-grade books).
    - **Seventy-nine percent** said emotional and social progress was good or excellent.

- **Ninety percent** said participation in the Developmental Program affected their children's self-confidence in a positive way.

4. A smaller percentage of parents consider the current academic progress of their children to be above average.
   - **Sixty-nine percent** said academic performance is good or excellent.

5. The Developmental Program is in essence a retention program because it adds a year to a child's education.
   - The student who "catches up" and moves to second grade is the exception rather than the rule according to **ninety-seven percent** of parents of students from the 1994-95 program.

6. Only a small percentage of students required special education services after completing the program.
   - Children did not enter special education programs after the 1994-95 Developmental Program according to **ninety percent** of parents.

7. Satisfaction is high among parents of students of the 1994-95 Developmental Program.
   - **Eighty-six percent** of parents said they were satisfied or very satisfied which exceeds the performance criterion of seventy-five percent established in the Evaluation Proposal.

8. Parental notification regarding recommendation for the program usually was initiated by a school professional other than the principal, but most parents found the method of notification satisfactory.
   - **Twenty-four percent** of parents said they were notified by the principal with a letter or conference (none said with a telephone call). **Seventy-six percent** responded "other."
   - **Ninety percent** said they were informed in such a way that they had a clear understanding of why their children were being recommended for the program.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Within guidelines, redefine the "developmental program" based on changes in the population of students served.

CHESAPEAKE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

ACHIEVEMENT INFORMATION FROM K-5 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

ACHIEVEMENT INFORMATION FROM K-5 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

This section provides the data collected from principals regarding the academic history of students of the 1991-92 Developmental Program currently enrolled and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

ACHIEVEMENT INFORMATION FROM K-5 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
(1991-92 DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS)

PURPOSE OF THE DATA COLLECTION:

In December 1996, principals of six K-5 elementary schools were asked to provide information to determine the academic history of all students who entered the Developmental Program in the 1991-92 school year and who were currently enrolled at the school. The six schools were selected because students from the developmental programs attended the schools through the fifth grade. The following information about each student was requested:

1. Current grade level
2. Iowa Tests of Basic Skills composite percentile score
3. Special education status

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

The sample of developmental students from the 1991-92 school year who were studied

1. were in the grade level appropriate for their chronological age five years after exiting the Developmental Program
2. scored at or above the school average on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in the 4th grade
3. were not placed in special education

FINDINGS (see Chart 10, page 71):

In January 1997 the following information about thirty-nine (39) students from the 1991-92 Developmental Program who were still enrolled at the six schools was provided:

1. **None** of the thirty-nine students (0%) were on the appropriate grade level for their age. All thirty-nine students were in the fifth grade.
2. **Six** students (15.4%) scored at or above the school average on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in the 4th grade.
3. **Twelve** students (31.7%) scored at or above the fiftieth percentile on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.
4. **Thirteen** students (33.3%) were receiving special education services.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The Developmental Program is in essence a retention program.
    - **None** of the students in the sample studied were in the grade level appropriate for their chronological age five years after exiting the program. In other words, none had "skipped" a grade in order to catch up with their kindergartner peers. This does not satisfy the first performance criterion above.

2. The academic achievement of most students of the 1991-92 Developmental Program was below average five years later.
    - **84.6%** of the sample studied were below the school average on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in the 4th grade which does not satisfy the performance criterion.
    - **68.3%** of the sample studied were below the fiftieth percentile on the Iowa Tests of

CHART 10
ACHIEVEMENT INFORMATION FROM K-5 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
1991-92 DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS

School	# Students on Appropriate Grade Level for Age	# Students At or Above School Average (ITBS)	# Students At or Above 50th Percentile (ITBS)	# Students in Special Education Services
Chittum (13 Students)	0	3	7	2
Southwestern (8 Students)	0	2	1	2
Camelot (4 Students)	0	0	0	1
Hickory (3 Students)	0	0	1	1
Southeastern (8 Students)	0	0	2	6
Treakle (3 Students)	0	1	1	1
TOTAL 39	0 = 0%	6 = 15.4%	12 = 31.7%	13 = 33.3%

Basic Skills in the 4th grade. At one school **53.8%** of the students scored above the fiftieth percentile on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.

3. The number of students placed in special education in the 1991-92 developmental programs suggests that distinguishing between learning disabilities and developmental immaturity at this age may be difficult.
    - **One-third** of the students in the 1991-92 Developmental Program required special education services after completing the program. In one school, **75%** of the students were placed in special education. If the school with the highest percentage of students in special education is excluded, the percentage of students requiring special education services is **23%**. These percentages are above average in light of the fact that (1) the Developmental Program is an intervention for students with average or above-average ability who are developmentally immature, (2) programs specifically designed for students who require special education services are available, and (3) information from the Special Education Department indicates that approximately 10-12% of the general population could be expected to qualify for special education services. This does not satisfy the third performance criterion.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Redefine the "developmental program" within guidelines based on changes in the population of students served.
2. Explore the possibility of shifting the focus of the teaching position/teaching assistant position of the Developmental Program from a retention program to a program designed to keep children on grade level.

CHESAPEAKE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

INFORMATION FROM CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

INFORMATION FROM CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

This section provides the data collected regarding staffing and costs associated with implementation of the Developmental Program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

INFORMATION FROM CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

PURPOSE OF THE DATA COLLECTION:

Information was obtained from central office administrators to determine how the cost of the Developmental Program compares to the cost of the regular first-grade program.

PERFORMANCE CRITERION FOR SUCCESS:

The per pupil cost of the Developmental Program does not exceed the per pupil cost of the regular program by more than **20%**.

FINDINGS (See Charts 11 and 12, page 75, Charts 13 and 14, page 76, Appendix 8, page 99, and Appendix 9, page 100:

1. Information from the Director of Budget indicates that the per pupil cost of enrolling a student in the Developmental Program in 1996-97 is $3,877. The per pupil cost of enrolling a student in the regular first-grade program is $2,125. These figures reflect personnel costs only.

2. Information from the Accounting Department indicates that the projected total per pupil cost for Chesapeake for 1996-97 is $5,509.

3. Information from the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel indicates that enrolling students in regular first grade after kindergarten instead of in the Developmental Program affects staffing as follows:
    - Based on enrollments in 1996-97, 12.7 teaching positions and 3.2 teacher assistant positions would be needed to accommodate all Developmental Program students in the regular first-grade program. Currently 16.7 teaching positions and 19 four-hour teaching assistant positions are being used.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Based on personnel costs, the cost of enrolling a student in the Developmental Program is $1,752 more than the cost of the regular first-grade program. Therefore, the personnel cost of the Developmental Program exceeds the cost of the regular first-grade program by 82% (see Chart 11, page 75). This does not satisfy the performance criterion for success.

2. Using the projected total per pupil cost of $5,509 and an average of 216 developmental students per year (two-year average), the estimated cost of an additional year of schooling for each class of developmental students is $1,189,944. Principals estimate that approximately 50% of these students would be retained at some point in their school career without the Developmental Program. The estimated cost of the remaining 50% of students who automatically spend an additional year in school due to the Developmental Program is $594,972 (see Chart 12, page 75).

CHART 11
PER PUPIL COST COMPARISON OF REGULAR FIRST GRADE AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Developmental First Grade Average Budgeted Per Pupil Cost * 1996-97	Regular Elementary Average Budgeted Per Pupil Cost * 1996-97	Dollar Difference	Percentage Difference
$3,877	$2,125	$1,752	82%

*Salaries and benefits only (see Appendix 8, page 99)

CHART 12
FUNDS AVAILABLE EACH YEAR IF NO DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Average Budgeted Per Pupil Cost 1996-97	Average Annual Number of Students in the Developmental Program	% of Developmental Students Not Likely to Be Retained in K-6**	Estimated Funds Available If Another Year of School Is Not Added for Developmental Students
$5,509	216	50.0%	$594,972

**Estimated by principals in an informal survey (see Appendix 10, page 101)

CHART 13
FUNDS AVAILABLE EACH YEAR IF NO DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Cost of 16.7 Teaching Positions for Developmental Program	Cost of 12.7 Additional Teaching Positions for First-Grade Program	Estimated Funds Available If No Developmental Program
$704,326	$535,625	$168,701

CHART 14
FUNDS AVAILABLE EACH YEAR IF NO DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Cost of 19 Part-time Teacher Assistants for Developmental Program	Cost of 3.2 Additional Full-TimeTeacher Assistants for First-Grade Program	Estimated Funds Available Each Year If No Developmental Program
$117,669	$51,004	$66,665

TOTAL = $235,366

3. The four teaching positions which would become available if the Developmental Program were eliminated and developmental students were enrolled in regular first grade represent $168,701 in monetary resources that could be reallocated to other programs. The 19 part-time teacher assistant positions could be reduced to 3.2 full-time positions if the Developmental Program were eliminated. This reduction in positions would be approximately $66,665. Therefore, the total amount available for reallocation is $235,366 (see Charts 13 and 14, page 76).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Due to cost factors, explore the possibility of shifting the focus of the teaching position/teaching assistant position of the Developmental Program from a retention program to a program designed to keep children on grade level.

2. Consider other appropriate programs with equal or lower costs.

CHESAPEAKE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I
OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

	Developmental Program Currently	Developmental Program Previously	Population Served	Next Grade After the Developmental Program	Termination/ Reason	Other Programs[1]
CHESAPEAKE	Yes (18 of 19 schools)	Yes	Students developmentally unready for regular 1st grade	Regular 1st grade or second grade	No	•K Developmental @ 1 school to prepare students for regular 1st grade) Reading Recovery
VIRGINIA BEACH	No	Yes	Students developmentally unready for regular 1st grade	Regular 1st grade	Yes, change in leadership and lack of achievement data	•Reading Recovery
PORTSMOUTH	Yes (some Chapter 1 schools)	Yes	Students developmentally unready for regular 1st grade	Regular 1st grade	No	•K-3 transitional classes (to improve reading) •Montessori Prog (1 school) •Reading Recovery
NORFOLK	No	No	NA	NA	NA	•Reading Recovery
NEWPORT NEWS	No	Yes	Students developmentally unready for regular 1st grade	Regular 1st grade	Yes, increases "overage" students	•Tutoring and mentoring •Reading Recovery
HAMPTON	No	Yes	Students developmentally unready for regular 1st grade	Regular 1st grade	Yes, preschool prog	•Reading Recovery •At-risk reading prog (Grades 1-3)
SUFFOLK	Yes (a few schools)	Yes	Students developmentally unready for regular 1st grade	Regular 1st grade	No	•Reading Recovery
CHESTERFIELD	No	Yes	Students developmentally unready for regular 1st grade	Regular 1st grade	Yes, preschool prog	•Reading Recovery
HENRICO	No	No	NA	NA	NA	•Reading Recovery •Part-time tutors

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[1] Only programs for students of regular school age are listed

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Of the nine responding school divisions (including Chesapeake)

    - Three currently have the Developmental Program (Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Portsmouth). Chesapeake has the program in eighteen elementary schools. Suffolk has the program in only a few schools. Portsmouth has the program in only a few Chapter 1 schools.

    - Four more previously had the Developmental Program.

    - All indicated that the Developmental Program serves students socially, emotionally, and/or physically unready for regular first grade.

    - Most students enter regular first grade upon completion of the Developmental Program.

    - Reasons given by the four who terminated the program were varied (see chart). The four who terminated the program have other programs for primary students, including Reading Recovery, individualized programs unique to each school division, and recent revisions to the curricula.

2. Representatives of the Department of Education voiced no official stance regarding the developmental program indicating that the programs are a local option and that opinions about the program are mixed.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM EVALUATION
QUESTIONS FOR TELEPHONE CONTACTS WITH OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

1. Do you have (or have you ever had) a Developmental Program?

2. If so, what is the population of students served by the program?

3. Do students in the program go to regular first grade or to second grade?

4. If you no longer have the program, why was it terminated?

5. What other programs are available for students developmentally unready for regular first grade or for other primary students (e.g., Reading Recovery)?

6. Other comments?

DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM EVALUATION
TELEPHONE CONTACTS WITH OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

VIRGINIA BEACH

Conversation with Pat House, Director of Instruction (427-4932), November 19

1. Virginia Beach had a "Transitional 1" program until four or five years ago.
2. The program served students who were developmentally immature, providing a bridge between kindergarten and first grade. Criteria were established and a checklist was used to identify developmental students. Students were in a separate classroom using specially designed materials. The student/teacher ratio was 15 to 1, and a teaching assistant was provided.
3. Students moved from the Transitional 1 program to regular first grade.
4. The program was terminated when a new superintendent was appointed. Virginia Beach was not able to show that students experienced academic success (in part because the program operated for only three years).
5. Virginia Beach now has Reading Recovery in some first-grade classrooms.
6. The Transitional 1 program was very popular among parents, teachers, and principals.

PORTSMOUTH

Conversation with Pat Fisher, Director of Instructional Services (393-8884), November 19; follow-up conversation with Bessie Tatum who works with Title 1, December 11

1. According to Pat Fisher, Portsmouth has never had the Developmental Program. Bessie Tatum said there is not a formal developmental program divisionwide but that a few Chapter I schools have a transitional class between K and grade 1.
2. These few transitional classrooms serve students who are developmentally unready for regular first grade.
3. Students go to regular first grade when they leave the transitional classroom.
4. Not applicable
5. Portsmouth has the following programs to serve primary students:
    - transitional classes (K-3) for students whose reading achievement is not at grade level. Entry is based solely on academic achievement in reading. Each grade (K-3) has a transitional classroom.
    - Success for All (K-5) is a program in which all students are regrouped according to their achievement levels without regard to age for ninety minutes of reading instruction each day. This program has been in existence for four years and is based on a Johns Hopkins University model.
    - One school has a Montessori Program (K-4).
    - Twelve out of seventeen schools have Reading Recovery teachers. Portsmouth is investigating the use of Reading Recovery strategies with kindergarten students.

NORFOLK

Conversation with Brenda Shepherd, Specialist for Multi-cultural Education, who is temporarily the kindergarten supervisor designee (441-2715), November 19

1. Norfolk does not have and has never had a developmental program for students unready for first grade.
2. Not applicable
3. Not applicable
4. Not applicable
5. Norfolk is involved in extensive curriculum revisions to institute developmentally appropriate practices in grades K-2. Norfolk has a transitional kindergarten for the developmentally unready called the Generic K. This program identifies developmental students before kindergarten and is an extension of their Pre-K program for 3 and 4 year olds. Norfolk has Reading Recovery in sixteen schools.

NEWPORT NEWS

Conversation with Brenda Winstead, Supervisor of Early Childhood Education, December 4. Phyllis Lewter indicated in an interview that Chesapeake's Developmental Program was modeled after the Newport News program and that Newport News personnel were helpful when the program was implemented in Chesapeake.

1. Newport News terminated their Developmental Program three years ago.
2. The program served students who were developmentally unready for the regular first grade.
3. Students went from the Developmental Program to regular first grade.
4. The structure of the Development Program worked. However, when Virginia instituted OAP assessments, a reporting of the percentage of overage children in the school division was required. Including students from the Developmental Program resulted in the reporting of a larger percentage of overage students.
5. Newport News has instituted a Primary Block Program which features individual language assessments for their K-2 students. Extensive support with regard to developmentally appropriate practices is provided to all teachers, and an intervention plan is created for those students who are not successful. This is a documented process in which students are targeted for interventions. The type of intervention used is left to the schools and may involve tutoring, mentoring, or the Child Study process.

   Reading Recovery is fully implemented in Newport News (one teacher for every fifty first -grade students). Reading Recovery provides academic, not developmental, support. Reading Recovery, however, provides the extra support needed to relieve some of the pressure on the first-grade teacher who may have developmentally unready students in the classroom. Implementation of Reading Recovery also has resulted in a reduction in their Special Education teaching staff.
6. If there is no Developmental Program, the key to success with unready students is to provide support structures in the first-grade classroom such as the plan used by Newport News and mentioned in #5 above.

HAMPTON

Conversation with Megan Schell, Director of Elementary Education (757-727-1234), December 12

1. Hampton had three transitional first grades which were phased out three years ago.
2. The program served students who were developmentally unready to enter regular first grade after completing kindergarten.
3. Students went to regular first grade.
4. Hampton offers a program for students with October, November, and December birthdays who cannot go to kindergarten. This has eliminated the need for the transitional program between K and first grade because most of the students enrolled in that program were children with October, November, and December birthdays.
5. Hampton also receives state funding through the Virginia Preschool Initiative to provide a program for four- year-old children with January through September birthdays.
   For nine years Hampton has had a program for grades one through three which targets at-risk children for reading and math instruction. Twelve teachers and twelve assistants are funded for this program. They look at citywide scores and send the twelve teachers to the twelve neediest elementary schools, then assign the assistants to the other twelve schools. Reading Recovery is offered in twelve of twenty-four elementary schools.
6. Their summer program involves identifying 400 rising second through fifth graders who are going to the next grade but whose promotion is marginal to increase achievement levels before the new school term begins.

SUFFOLK

Conversation with Jackie Marshall, Director of Elementary Instruction (757-925-5500), December 12

1. Suffolk has a few schools who have a T-1 program between kindergarten and first grade. The principal decides whether or not to offer the program.
2. The T-1 program serves students who are developmentally unready for first grade.
3. Students go to regular first grade from the T-1 program.

4. Not applicable
5. Suffolk is in their second year of following the Virginia Preschool initiative for offering developmental classes to four-year-olds at risk for failure in kindergarten. They also offer Reading Recovery in five schools as well as Title 1 Reading labs for students in grades one through five who have been identified as below their grade level in reading. Students are scheduled into the reading lab during the day.
6. Suffolk is emphasizing the need for developmentally appropriate practices through training teachers for the four-year-old program and through inservices to kindergarten teachers.

CHESTERFIELD

Conversation with C. L. Slonaker, Director of Elementary Education, December 12

1. Chesterfield previously had transitional classes between kindergarten and first grade.
2. The transitional classes served students who were unready for regular first grade.
3. Students entered regular first grade upon completion of the transitional grade. Students would have been permitted to go to second grade if they had achieved that grade level in the transitional program.
4. The preschool program eliminated the need for the Developmental Program. One school, however, is trying a "bridge" class between all grades up to grade 3 for those with difficulty learning.
5. Chesterfield has Reading Recovery in their Title 1 schools.
6. Chesterfield students generally score one year plus above the norms on national tests.

HENRICO

Conversation with the Reading Recovery Specialist, January 8

1. Henrico has never had the Developmental Program.
2. Not applicable
3. Not applicable
4. Not applicable
5. Henrico has ten Reading Recovery teachers in Title I schools, a Pre-K program for at-risk students, and two other programs in which part-time teachers assist lower achieving students--one for first graders and one for first through fifth grade students.
6. Henrico has never implemented the Developmental Program because of the retention issue.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Conversation with Cheryl Strobel who works with Title 1. She could not say which schools in Virginia have Developmental Programs (defined as a grade positioned between kindergarten and regular first grade). She indicated that this is a local option. Mrs. Strobel said that opinions regarding the program are mixed.

Conversation with Jenna Clayton, Elementary Specialist, December 20. Mrs. Clayton noted that the research she has does not support the developmental first grade.

APPENDIX 2
WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENTALLY YOUNG CHILD? *

SOCIALLY

1. Self concept not well developed.
2. Reluctant to participate at the beginning of the school year.
3. Immature - often clings caregiver.
4. Relates best to younger children.
5. Not apt to assume leadership role.
6. Can be extremely outgoing or withdrawn.
7. Can be extremely verbal or extremely quiet.

EMOTIONALLY

1. Cries easily.
2. Lacks self confidence to do many things.
3. Sometimes fears physical contact with peers.
4. May be over anxious about "being right."
5. Short attention span - may escape by daydreaming.

PHYSICALLY

1. Tires easily, especially in the afternoon.
2. Fine muscle coordination is generally poor (difficulty with scissors, crayons, pencils).
3. Gross muscle coordination is generally poor (difficulty with skipping, hopping, jumping).
4. Frequently absent.
5. Visual perception inaccurate and inconsistent (skips or reverses lines or words).
6. Physical appearance resembles that of a 4 1/2 to 5 year old.

INTELLECTUALLY

1. Has difficulty completing work.
2. Takes longer to develop study habits.
3. Needs rigid daily schedule.
4. Lacks understanding of time-space concept.
5. Lacks understanding of language experiences.
6. Inconsistent in attending skills.
7. High or average intelligence may be accompanied by low academic achievement.

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*Standard written material to be used in the Developmental Program screening process.

APPENDIX 3

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING CHECKLIST *

Name ________________________ DOB ____________________ Date ______________

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate with a check the behaviors observed. A child who is at risk in any area will be referred to the Developmental Screening Team.

LEARNING FACTORS (2 or more)

___ Cannot tell when objects are different or same
___ Cannot match shapes or forms
___ Cannot do simple puzzles (6 piece jigsaw)
___ Cannot reproduce simple 3 bead pattern from memory

LANGUAGE FACTORS (3 or more)

___ Does not understand directions
___ Cannot associate common objects (shoe-sock)
___ Cannot classify objects by category
___ Cannot name familiar objects
___ Talks in phrases rather than sentences

AUDITORY FACTORS (5 or more)

___ Cannot discriminate between speech sounds
___ Cannot repeat a sentence
___ Does not hear rhymes
___ Often asks to have words repeated
___ Cannot follow more than one direction
___ Cannot pay attention when there is noise in the room
___ Cannot tell when sounds are different or same
___ Cannot locate the source or direction of sounds
___ Cannot identify 80% of letter names that have been introduced
___ Cannot identify 80% of letter sounds that have been introduced

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS (3 or more)

___ Does not walk easily, maintaining balance throughout
___ Cannot throw ball
___ Cannot catch ball
___ Cannot jump with two feet together
___ Cannot hop on one foot
___ Cannot maintain balance while walking on a balance beam
___ Cannot identify body parts

VISUAL FACTORS (3 or more)

___ Exhibits eye fatigue (blinking, itching, tearing)
___ Does not maintain proper distance from paper or desk while working
___ Cannot find place in workbooks, etc.
___ Does not complete work presented on a crowded page
___ Cannot discriminate between various colors, shapes, objects, and letters

SELF-RELIANCE/EMOTIONAL FACTORS (4 or more)

___ Sometimes fears physical contact with others
___ Lacks confidence
___ Cries easily
___ Is overly confident
___ Is careless
___ Is reluctant to perform
___ Needs much encouragement
___ Performs well only when continuous individual attention is given
___ Is overly concerned about failure
___ Relates best to younger children
___ Responds impulsively
___ Becomes impatient when presented with difficult task
___ Has short attention span
___ Is overly active
___ Exhibits habits: nail biting, facial tics, thumb sucking, stuttering, etc.
___ Tires easily
___ Often clings to adults

FINE MOTOR FACTORS (2 or more)

___ Cannot cut on lines
___ Does not demonstrate hand dominance (switches hands to perform tasks)
___ Does not write legibly
___ Cannot color simple pictures with control
___ Cannot trace with control
___ Cannot copy shapes or letters with control

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*Standard written material to be used in the Developmental Program screening process.

APPENDIX 4
GROUP MEETING WITH PRINCIPALS
JANUARY 13, 1997

1. Are the original goals and objectives of the Developmental Program still relevant today?

GROUP 1: Yes. Some children still need the gift of time socially, emotionally, and/or physically.
GROUP 2: Yes. The goals are relevant today. They provide (a) experiences for social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth, and (b) opportunities for student movement and exploration.
GROUP 3: More hands-on materials
To aid students who had average or above ability but were not ready for the requirements of regular first grade
To prepare students to be ready to go on to second grade
To reduce class size for students who needed more time--one-to-one instruction
Yes. The original goals and objectives are still relevant today.

DISCUSSION:
The goals are especially still relevant in language, providing lots of experiences. The smaller teacher/student ratios provide more chance for students to speak and interact.

The transitional classes originated in the 1980's. Schools had a kindergarten, developmental grade, and first grade. Students from the developmental grades went to first grade as leaders. Since then there has been an age rollback for beginning school (from December 30 to September 30 so that students do not begin school as early). The reading program has also changed and is more developmentally appropriate today. The first-grade teachers should be the best, but they cannot deal with a large group of children.

Three-quarters of the students go to the first grade and are confident. Many of these students lack support at home. They need emotional support and may never be on track academically. This program brings them along further emotionally.

If a student appears to be progressing well, we try placing them in a second-grade classroom to test their readiness.

One principal said his school enrolls students according to the original definition of the program. He said that perhaps the program is not as relevant with the age rollback and the more developmentally appropriate curriculum.

2. What does the Developmental Program offer that the regular first grade does not?

GROUP 1: The gift of time in a developmentally appropriate setting
Better/smaller student-teacher ratios
Still more hands--on learning and less structured than regular first grade
Allows opportunity to be a more successful first grader
Not as bound by first-grade curriculum
GROUP 2: Smaller class size, more individual attention
Half-day teacher assistant (four hours)
Emphasis is on a developmental approach
More flexibility in instructional planning
GROUP 3: Smaller class size
Teacher assistant (four hours)
Flexible curriculum
Full-day program as compared to half-day if retained in kindergarten

DISCUSSION:
In the Developmental Program students have the opportunity to be in class a full day.

There is no curriculum for the Developmental Program. The first-grade curriculum is not used because we do not want them to repeat it in first grade.

The class size is small in the Developmental Program with a desired maximum number of 15 students. Usually the Developmental Program teacher is one of the best in the school.

A teaching assistant is also available for four hours of the day.

With regard to any negative effects of adding another year to the education of the developmental students, many factors are considered in selecting students for the program. We try to make sure a child won't be nineteen years old upon graduation, and we look at physical characteristics such as size.

This is not a typical retention since the child is not repeating material. The Developmental Program has its own materials.

Parents often do not want their child to enroll in the Developmental Program because of the extra year, and the students continue to have problems. Often parents come back and request that their child be placed in the Developmental Program.

The program increases the number of overage students.

3. What is the level of satisfaction with the program among parents, teachers, and administrators?

GROUP 1: Very satisfied
Occasionally parents forget that moving to first grade is the expectation.
GROUP 2: Parents of previous and current students are very satisfied.
Teachers and administrators are satisfied.
Teachers of combination Developmental Program/first-grade class are not as satisfied.
GROUP 3: Parents appear to be satisfied with the program (parents of students in the program only).

DISCUSSION:
Parents in general are satisfied, but some express concern that their child will not be going to second grade. The teachers must sell the idea.

Teachers with combination classes do not like the situation because it makes classroom management difficult. One principal indicated that he would rather eliminate the program than combine the Developmental Program with a first-grade class. His solution would be to spread the few students among all the first-grade classes.

In some cases the parents do not like placing their child in the program but later on like the program.

One principal noted that she has seen problems resurface in the fourth grade with students who were placed in the Developmental Program after kindergarten. Parents then say the child would have been better off if he had not been enrolled in the program especially when the student now does not qualify for special education services. A retention may be needed, but the principal does not retain.
The principal indicated that she would not have handled the situation differently because it is difficult to predict if problems will resurface.

One principal has the Developmental Program on the kindergarten rather than the first-grade level. They have eliminated "maturity" as a factor in the screening process and look strictly at language delays along with gross and fine motor skills. The principal still considers this a Developmental Program.

One principal noted that many of the developmentally delayed have been moved from school to school.

4. What other programs would work in place of the current Developmental Program?

GROUP 1: First grade is more developmentally appropriate in some schools than they were.
The age rollback has impacted enrollment in the program.
A full-day kindergarten would be needed if there is no Developmental Program.

GROUP 2: Reading Recovery would work on a limited basis, but this program should not be confused with developmental needs.
Multi-age grouping perhaps
A general program (as a replacement) developed on the school level

GROUP 3: Early intervention kindergarten program (GATreakle Pilot Program)

DISCUSSION:
Some things have already been done. We now have a more developmentally appropriate curriculum and the age for entrance has been rolled back. These have helped some.

A full-day kindergarten is needed. Parents do not want their children to remain in a half-day program.

Reading Recovery should not be a replacement for the Developmental Program. The students have needs beyond reading. The lowest achieving students are selected for Reading Recovery, and only a small number of students are served. Developmentally immature students probably could not handle the structure of Reading Recovery. Multi-age grouping would be a possibility.

Teaching assistants are needed all day.

In the one Developmental Program which serves kindergarten students, the teaching assistant splits her time between the morning and afternoon groups. Also, when asked about serving students with developmental problems in first grade, the principal indicated that they are not seeing as many first-grade students with developmental needs.

One principal expressed the need for a program which serves a combination of situations (e.g., developmental, academically at risk).

One principal admitted that if he has a situation in which he does not have a place for a student the student is placed in the Developmental Program. He indicated that teachers are concerned with keeping the program purely developmental.

In the school which has the Developmental Program serving kindergarten students, they have had fewer retentions this year.

APPENDIX 5
GROUP MEETING WITH DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM TEACHERS AND READING SPECIALISTS
JANUARY 14, 1997

The ten teachers and reading specialists discussed the Developmental Program with evaluation team members in informal conversations. The discussion centered around four questions. Questions and responses were as follows:

1. **What is the profile of the student in the Developmental Program?**
   - As the reading specialist, I did not anticipate the population of students served at my school. Students are well below the criteria of mastering 80% of kindergarten skills. Most are not ready to read developmentally. There are kids in the program who seem more appropriate for kindergarten. The Developmental Program teacher is a first-year teacher in the program.
   - Our screening process is very careful so that our students are as purely developmental as
   - possible--bright but immature. We find that it is hard to get parental permission for placement in the Developmental Program and presently have nine students. I was a long-term substitute for the Developmental Program. When I had the same students from the Developmental Program in third grade, I found them very well behaved.
   - We have a good screening process now, but previously students were not as carefully screened. We have twelve students.
   - I was the Developmental Program teacher in another school last year, and the students were just developmental students. I now have a combination Developmental Program and first-grade classroom--five developmental students and fifteen students in regular first grade. The first graders I have are at the top of the first grade. It is an impossible, frustrating situation. Without careful screening, the program gets students with behavior problems. Some of the children need medication. They are being put in the Developmental Program because there is no place to put them. Parents do not see their children succeeding. The school division is moving more toward a developmentally appropriate curriculum, but teachers have to be trained in the new reading program. Some are still "separating the readers into groups." It is very hard to get rid of the traditional teaching.

2. **What are the advantages for students who enroll in the Developmental Program?**
   - The program builds their self-esteem. My nephew was in the program last year. It was a positive experience for him. He is one of the top first graders. Developmental students notice how other students are doing and compare themselves to others. There are usually two developmental students per each first-grade class in the school. Some parents do not want their child in the program because of the retention issue.
   - I have some at-risk and some developmental students. I receive more support from the parents of developmental students. If the developmental child is placed in first grade, the teacher complains. Once students have been in the Developmental Program, however, the regular first-grade teacher wants those children. Many of my students have ended up in the gifted and talented program.
   - The Developmental Program allows more time for growth.

3. **What are the disadvantages for students who enroll in the program?**
   - The retention issue is a problem for some parents. Also, we need a full-day teaching assistant.
   - The teachers at my school (from a reading specialist) asked me to bring the message that if the Developmental Program cannot be run the correct way, according to the program guidelines, they would rather not have the program. They cannot do justice to either group when they have a group of developmental students and a group of regular first graders in one class. They would rather divide the developmental students among all the regular first-grade teachers and use inclusion techniques to work with them. The Developmental Program was not meant for the slow learner but is being used for that purpose in some schools. I was involved in the origination of the program. We have gone from a strict definition of the program to one which includes students with academic difficulties. I

have seen behavior problems from students who were recommended to the program but were not enrolled.

- I would suggest that one teacher take the few developmental students from two schools rather than combining the Developmental Program with a first-grade class.
- Our principal supports the program, but our numbers are large (17) because the kindergarten teachers are not evaluating students as extensively as they should. The program is used as a catch-all. I have students with disabilities that I cannot help. The program is not being implemented as designed. The program was not meant to serve a mixed group.
- We need to look at what the school division will stand behind. If it is not a truly developmental program, the name needs to be changed.
- I would like to see an evaluation of students who were recommended for the program but went to regular first grade instead. Many of these students end up in remedial groups.
- The retention issue is not a problem for students later on. I have seen middle schoolers who were in the program who are doing well. There is such a wide variety of ages among students anyway.
- If there is potential for a student to go to second grade, we move them during the year to regular first grade. We do not wait until the next year and send them to second grade.

4. **Would developmentally young students be served better by other programs?**
   - I like Reading Recovery. I would like to learn some of the techniques through workshops.
   - Reading Recovery and the Developmental Program address different needs.
   - The Kindergarten Developmental Program with students progressing to first grade may assist, but you cannot rush developmental skills. This is not a developmental program.

OTHER COMMENTS:

- There is no support for the program and inconsistency in the program from school to school. In the beginning there was sharing among teachers.
- The more people involved in the selection process and the longer the process, the better. Students should be observed several times. We would be more assured of getting the appropriate population.
- The new reading program is more developmentally appropriate, but teachers will have to be trained to use it.
- There should be a standard for the program (when and what to cover) and for evaluating students.

APPENDIX 6
COMMENTS FROM SURVEY OF CURRENT PARENTS
(1996-97 Developmental Program)

General Comments

- I am very glad to have the opportunity to evaluate this Developmental Program. I had high hopes of my child's success in developmental first grade and was told since his 4 year old preschool class that this was a perfect placement for him due to his summer birthday, small size, and relative immaturity with regard to fine-motor skills. For two years I was told that he was the "perfect candidate" for a developmental program, because he was bright but young, and this would give him the "gift of time" to mature. His kindergarten teacher recommended his placement but I don't believe the principal had any input.

We started in a new elementary school with a new principal who assured us that these children had to have 80% of the skills required for first grade entry. She told parents that this was not a class for ED, LD, EMR or behavior problem children. I questioned her closely on this point, knowing that the school system does not test students this early for these problems.

Two weeks into the school term my son was hurt and tickled in private parts by another student whom, we subsequently determined, had been recommended to this program by the previous principal because he was a "behavior problem". Most of the 10 other students in the class don't know how to read. Many do not know the alphabet or associated sounds. Many cannot count. The developmental teacher told me that, although my son is the "perfect developmental student", he could not get the academic attention he deserved because he was so far ahead of the other students. He started attending another 1st grade class for Language Arts for a couple weeks, and that teacher thought he would do well in first grade. I resisted the transfer initially, because I had intended for him this academic path of two years in first grade to give him some extra developmental time. After spending time in the developmental first grade and seeing the wide discrepancy in skill levels there, we transferred out of developmental into the regular 1st grade.

I was deeply disappointed by this experience and would like to suggest that the criteria for recommending students to the program be clarified and that a curriculum be followed. This program should not be for students whose parents do not want them to repeat kindergarten, as I was told was the case with at least 3 of the 10 students in this year's class. Everyone from the principal to the teachers to the guidance counselors assured me that my son was "perfect" for this program, yet he was forced to transfer out of it because of numerous misplacement of other students. Developmental first grade should teach a modified first grade curriculum, not a kindergarten curriculum for student who should be there.

Thank you for the opportunity to vent about this experience. My son seems to be doing well now that he has a permanent place in first grade. I only hope that this decision is the right one for his future academic success.

I would encourage you to take a close look at this Developmental Program to determine its purpose and to ensure that this is clearly communicated to parents. There seems to be some misunderstanding about the criteria for entry into the program. Perhaps my negative experience could have been avoided had there been some written guidelines for students in the Developmental Program.

- I am very glad that I received this questionnaire since it gives me an opportunity to express my feelings about this program. There is no doubt that it is the best program that I have come across. I have had children in school systems in California and in Virginia. My oldest is a senior, and I have one in middle school and one in primary. This program should have been in place when my first was having the same troubles 11 years ago. It has been exactly what my son needed. There is no doubt that he would be struggling if he was in the 1st grade and he didn't really need to repeat kindergarten. I believe that the way this class is taught it should be incorporated into all kindergarten classes. I am very thankful that it exists. My son would be at the bottom of the class instead of the top. If he enters 1st or 2nd grade it doesn't really matter. But, if it is the 1st grade I'm sure he'll enter at the top of the class. He has progressed and he is not frustrated like he was in kindergarten. He really enjoys the class and especially the teacher. The small class size is very important. My son is very proud of himself and so am I. I am grateful this program exists and I hope it continues because there are many children that could benefit from it. It has given him the extra time he has needed in order to mature and develop. I feel there would be unnecessary burdens on the teachers in my child's future if he had not had this opportunity. So, I support this program totally.

- I feel fortunate that this program is available. My son has improved but more than this, I believe it was almost "tailor made" for his academic growth.

- My son is not progressing very well in his class. His teacher is outstanding, but I don't think that my son will be ready for regular first grade next year, and furthermore, just because a child scores well on special education pre-screening tests does not mean he doesn't need special education. A lot of his time is being wasted because nobody will help him. HELP MY SON GET THE EDUCATION HE NEEDS AND DESERVES PLEASE!!!

- The only comment I have is that I think the children should be reading. They do not do enough reading

- I couldn't be more pleased with this program. My son has made great leaps so far this year.

- The Developmental Program should be continued. Our results have been nothing less than positive. There has been increased reading comprehension and math improvement. Confidence level is much better.

- My daughter is a very bright little girl. However, due to family trauma and a lack of interest on her mother's part, she is behind socially and academically. Her progress in the last year has been remarkable. I feel it is a combination of therapy, a security at home, and the program which she is in at school.

- My oldest daughter was recommended for this program last year and is now doing extremely well in regular first grade. My son is also in this program for 1996-97 and is doing very well also. We, my husband and I, are very pleased with the program and hope that it will continue to serve the students in such a way that they're able to continue on to regular grades as my children have.

- I hope this evaluation survey is not too late. I put it aside and almost forgot about it. I also want to let you know how thankful I am that this program is available for my daughter. I feel sure that she will be more then ready for regular first grade in September and therefore, we feel positive that she will do well in her future grades in school. We are confident that this one extra year to mature and have more self-confidence will make a great difference in her future.

- We are seeing great improvement in our son's emotional development. We are so happy that this program was available, so that the next 12 years will be easier for him, rather than a struggle to keep up - because he wasn't emotionally ready for kindergarten at age 5. His teacher is an exceptional teacher and role model for these kids. While teaching them independence and self-confidence, she is tender and nurturing when they most need it. The only alternative to CHAMPS, might be a Pre-K class for these kids so that you do away with the confusion of "what grade are you in?" (Between K & 1st) If there were some sort of effective evaluation process at 5 to determine if they are ready for kindergarten, or would benefit more from a year of Pre-K. Don't alleviate this program, though.

- I believe that the recommendation that my child enter the developmental program was a very positive decision which I think will affect her throughout her entire educational years. It scares me to think she could have been moved straight to first grade (as her parent) knowing she was not ready. She is very bright, yet, was immature at the end of kindergarten. Thankfully, her kindergarten teacher saw her potential and recommended this program. I will always appreciate the Chesapeake School System for its insight and am very grateful for the Developmental Program that was available to her.

- I am very pleased with the Developmental First Grade program. Without this program I would have had to look for a private school for my son. He mastered the academic portion of kindergarten so if we had placed him in kindergarten again, he would have been extremely unmotivated. If we had placed him in regular first grade he would have been very frustrated in a class of approximately 25 students and one teacher who would not have had the time for any individual attention. He would have been lost in the shuffle. Developmental First Grade has allowed him one year to mature to catch up with 1st graders. Most students entering first grade have been 6 for many months and getting ready to turn 7. My son would have barely been 6 if he had entered 1st grade following kindergarten. I feel his self-esteem has much improved in the Developmental Program. Without this program many children will suffer. Note: We considered the option of delaying kindergarten one year but were told by his preschool teacher and others that he was ready. At that time, he showed no sign of not being ready. He met all the criteria listed for students entering kindergarten.

- The Developmental Program I feel was the best choice we had ever made academically for our child. Academically, our child was ready for 1st grade, but not all children are ready emotionally, socially and maturity level wise. It was a blessing and I would recommend any parent to this class. I don't know personally any parent that didn't love the class. Thank you that my child was able to participate.

- The answer to number two is not about above or below average. My daughter could of went to first grade as far as knowing & learning. But her kindergarten teacher felt that she was not mature for first grade.
  The answer to number three was "D" and that is because I had already talked to her kindergarten teacher.
  The answer to four was "A" and that is because there is no other way to answer a question like this for the simple reason when a teacher tells you that your child is not mature enough for first grade you have to just look at it like ok. Because there is no way I could make a difference on a statement that makes sense or not. Because the teacher was the one watching how she was doing on her work and her way of doing her work.
  The answer to five was "A", but again, that was not something answered fairly because, in some of what I see, I could say yes and then I could say well what's going to happen when she gets to first grade and she gets bored with the work or she has a hard time? This is just something I have to wait and see, and hope it was right.
  The answer to six also "A", but that is answered also in number five comment.
  You see the answers on the sheet for 7-13. I look at all this as some of these questions should of been asked by the teacher, not the parent. As far as the answers to number 10-11, would it matter if I said second because I am not a teacher and I can not grade her the way the teacher does, and the answer to twelve - she loves it with a positive outlook and on thirteen, I have no problems at all with the teacher or the Developmental Program. But, you all should rephrase some of the questions.

APPENDIX 7
COMMENTS FROM SURVEY OF PAST PARENTS
(1994-95 DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM)

General Comments

- Developmental Program does not deal with possible ADHD issues or any other program in the school system. The school system seems to shy away from this problem. We are finally getting the proper guidance on this and she is finally getting a thorough evaluation to see what problems we need to confront in helping our daughter. Most of this has come from sources outside of the school system. The extra time of another year and especially the involvement of her developmental teacher is what helped her, but she is still struggling to cope in the school environment.

- I was very pleased to have the opportunity to place my child in the Developmental First Grade program. My oldest child (with a July birth date) had to be retained in first grade at a time when Developmental was not available. She was too bright to repeat kindergarten, yet she struggled in 1st grade. By January, we knew she would have to be retained. She was very traumatized by the struggle she had to make to get through that 1st year of 1st grade. She really needed a Developmental Program. Unfortunately for her, it was not available at Greenbrier at that time. When my second child was weak academically coming out of kindergarten, we did not hesitate to place him. He loved the class, was challenged, and yet; his self-esteem soared! He came out of the program very confident of himself in 1st grade (unlike how our daughter entered 1st grade). Now as a second grader he is a child who is progressing very well and is full of self-confidence. I just can't say enough about how important I feel this program is. When I heard that Chesapeake may do away with Developmental, I was very upset. It is a wonderful gift to give a child that extra year with the stigma of retention.

- My child did very well in the developmental program. Some kids teased her about being in 1st grade two years; she was bothered by that some. Now she's in second and doing fine . . . She's in the reading program. She's progressing and loves her teacher and school! Overall, I would recommend this program to any parent concerned about their child's maturity and readiness to work and learn.

- This program was very beneficial to our child. He would not have been successful in first grade if he had not been in this program.

- We were disappointed in the developmental program. Our child was put into the program because she was a little behind in her academic maturity. She had no learning disabilities or problems socially. Her birthday is in August, so she was young. We were told by her kindergarten teacher and the principal how wonderful the program was and how much it would benefit. We agreed with the placement. The program didn't meet our expectations at all. It was basically a review of kindergarten without going any further. They did very little work. The teacher was lazy and so boring and her assistant was no better. I volunteered in the classroom and saw first hand. They have a new teacher for developmental this year so I'm sure a lot of the problems have been worked out. If I had a choice to do it again, I would still put my child in the program. I just see lots of room for improvement. My child is now in the 2nd grade. She is still struggling with reading skills but doing great otherwise. I think the majority of the problems were the teacher, not the program itself.

12. The class neither helped nor hurt her self-confidence.

Comments on Specific Questions

2. I would not classify our daughter as being "below average academic ability." She merely needed the extra year to "catch up" to where she should be. We also had just changed school systems - from Florida to here.

3. It was recommended by her kindergarten teacher in Florida. However, if there wasn't a developmental program here, she was to be put in first grade. We did not know there was a program until we moved two months prior to school starting.

14. The teacher is absolutely wonderful. I believe if it wasn't for her, the developmental class wouldn't be what it is.

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2. My son had an IQ of 104 (average range) on the Stanford-Binet (tested by private psychologist), but was diagnosed with ADHD and had not progressed as he should have in kindergarten.

12. Had my son progressed to first grade there is no doubt in my mind he would have failed miserably and his self-confidence would have suffered negatively. Had he been held back in kindergarten, I believe he would have been bored since he was somewhat more advanced academically than the others a year younger, socially, he tends to play with younger children probably in part due to his ADHD. He currently takes Ritalin 2x daily (5mg).

14. This is one of the most valuable programs the public schools have, in my opinion, with smaller class sizes and more individualized teaching, this program prevents failures down the road, saving self-esteem and better preparing those children not quite ready for first grade. Please don't eliminate it. Aside from learning, a child must experience success to enjoy future learning as a positive goal. This program ensures that.

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3. Did not know until report card in June and then I telephoned the school (did not like this).

4. Yes, after I called the school and talked with Developmental teacher.

▸ Being in developmental was a blow to my son's self esteem. And to compound this problem, the teacher went out of her way to spend the school year chastising him. In addition, my son regressed in reading, the one area he would have used help. My wife and I spent the summer teaching him basic phonics/reading assignments to get him ready for 1st grade. My son's first grade teacher worked with him and by year's-end he was doing excellently in all subjects. She also had to rebuild his ego (academically). So far, in second grade, he is getting "excellent" in all subject. In closing, my son's developmental teacher was incompetent and I could have kept (my son) at home for a year and been substantially ahead. Finally, I think the Chesapeake Public School system should put their best (K-6) teachers in the Developmental Program. Because in this case, it appears they used a substandard teacher.

2. Needed to mature emotionally.

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4 Our son's teacher almost turned us off to the idea because she was so pushy about it. She also started talking to us about the program in August before she even met our child. She based her opinion on his age, his sex and his birth order. Her stereotypes almost pushed us away, until we went and observed the class. We decided to put him in the program, not because of the kindergarten teacher's recommendation, but because of the wonderful opportunity to have the teacher and be a part of that class.

2. My child was put into Developmental First Grade instead of kindergarten, due to advanced achievement.

5/6. No one seemed interested in our thoughts and opinions on this issue -- only in the preservation of the status quo. They kept bringing up the possible emotional trauma our daughter could experience when all of her friends were taking driver's education and she would not be old enough (this was discussed in reference to placing her directly into a regular first grade). Come on! She has a December birthday, which would have placed her only a few months younger than some of her other classmates should she have been allowed to try placement in a regular first grade - Driver's Education is offered in both semesters. Besides, I certainly believe that type of trauma can be dealt with by the parents quite nicely. I too was in a similar position because I was 4 ½ when I started school. Let's face it -- no one wanted to try something different. My daughter was willing to give it a try -- it was, as a matter of fact she who brought up the idea of a regular first grade placement before we even discussed it together. It seems we had been thinking a parallel levels.

9. I don't believe it was any different than it would have been if she'd been elsewhere.

12. Her self-confidence is fine. Her motivation is poor, because she thinks everything is too easy. She keeps begging me to home-school her.

14. While I'm not satisfied with my daughter's having been through the Developmental Program, I do believe it has a place in the school system. It certainly beats the idea of "repeating kindergarten," which is how certain problems were approached when I was in school. However, I believe teachers are unwilling to accept differences in children's temperaments and are too quick to recommend children for placement into the developmental program who do not belong there. I'm not talking about my daughter alone. I know of another child who was academically on line for placement into first grade but was recommended for the Developmental Program due to her gregarious and sometimes outspoken temperament.

APPENDIX 8

PER PUPIL COST COMPARISON OF REGULAR FIRST GRADE AND DEVELOPMENTAL FIRST GRADE

Regular Elementary First Grade

Number of Students	2,843
Budgeted Teacher FTE	131.3
Budgeted Teacher Assistant FTE	31.6
Budgeted Dollars	
Average Teacher Salary $33,579	$4,408,923
Fringe Benefits @ 25.6%	$1,128,684
Average Teacher Assistant $12,690	$ 401,004
Fringe Benefits @ 25.6%	$ 102,657
TOTAL BUDGETED	**$6,041,268**
TOTAL AVERAGE PER PUPIL COST	**$ 2,125**

Developmental First Grade

Number of Students	212
Budgeted Teacher FTE	16.7
Budgeted Teacher Assistants	19
Budgeted Dollars	
Average Teacher Salary $33,579	$560,769
Fringe Benefits @ 25.6%	$143,557
Base Teacher Assistant Hourly Rate $7.57	$109,307*
Fringe Benefits (FICA only) @ 7.65%	$ 8,362*
TOTAL BUDGETED	**$821,995**
TOTAL AVERAGE PER PUPIL COST	**$ 3,877**

*Part-time (4 hours per day for 190 days)

APPENDIX 9
NUMBER OF TEACHING POSITIONS AVAILABLE IF NO DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

School	Total # Regular 1st & Developmental Students	Maximum # Students per Teacher (SOQ/K-3 Regulations)	Teaching Positions Required if SOQ/K-3 Regulations Used	# Teaching Positions Currently with Developmental Program*	# Teaching Positions Available without Developmental Program*
Butts Road Primary	231	24	10**	11	1
Camelot Elementary	97	20	5	5	0
Crestwood Elementary	158	24	7	7	0
Chittum Elementary	112	24	5	5	0
Deep Creek Central	159	24	7	8	1
Deep Creek Elementary	134	24	6	7	1
Georgetown Primary	227	20	11	10	-1
Great Bridge Primary	240	24	10	11	1
Greenbriar Primary	217	24	9	10	1
Hickory Elementary	76	24	3	4	1
Thurgood Marshall	143	15	10	8	-2
Norfolk Highlands Primary	68	20	3	4	1
Portlock Primary	164	20	8	8	0
Southeastern Elementary	118	24	5	6	1
Southwestern Elementary	95	18	5	5	0
Treakle Elementary	120	20	6	6	0
Western Branch Primary	251	24	10	11	1
B.M. Williams Primary	275	20	14	13	-1
Rena B. Wright Primary	153	18	9	8	-1
				TOTAL	4

*Rounded to the nearest whole number

**Column 1 ÷ Column 2 or 231 ÷ 24 = 10 (teaching positions required if all students entered regular 1st grade)

APPENDIX 10
INFORMAL SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS
ESTIMATED RETENTIONS IF NO DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Estimated Retentions	**0-10%**	**11-20%**	**21-30%**	**31-40%**	**41-50%**	**51-60%**	**61-70%**	**71-80%**	**81-90%**	**91-100%**
Number of Principals	3	1	2	2	1			1	4	5